BATMAN
No.40
APRIL...MAY
TEN CENTS
A SUPERMAN PUBLICATION
DC
BAT MAN
BATMAN AND ROBIN ARE BAD LUCK FOR THE Joker WHEN HE JOINS "The 13 Club"
DAILY BUGLE
FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH

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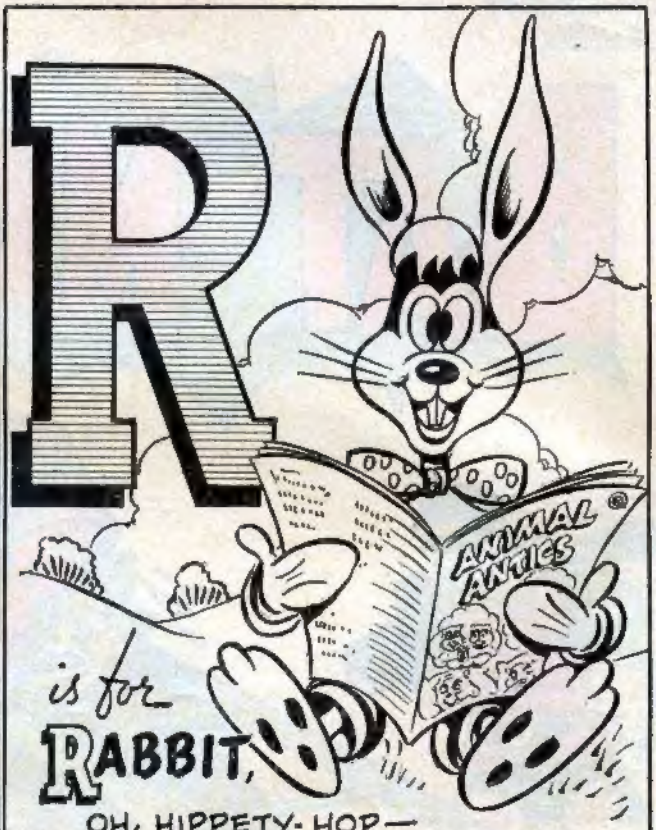

is for RABBIT,

OH, HIPPETY-HOP—
ONCE HE STARTS READING
HE JUST HATES TO STOP!
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY?
IT'S REALLY QUITE CLEAR—
HIS GUIDE IS THIS SYMBOL,
GUARANTEE OF GOOD CHEER!

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—ON THE COVER OF ANIMAL ANTICS FOR EXAMPLE! IT'S YOUR GUARANTEE OF THE BEST IN ANY COMIC MAGAZINE!

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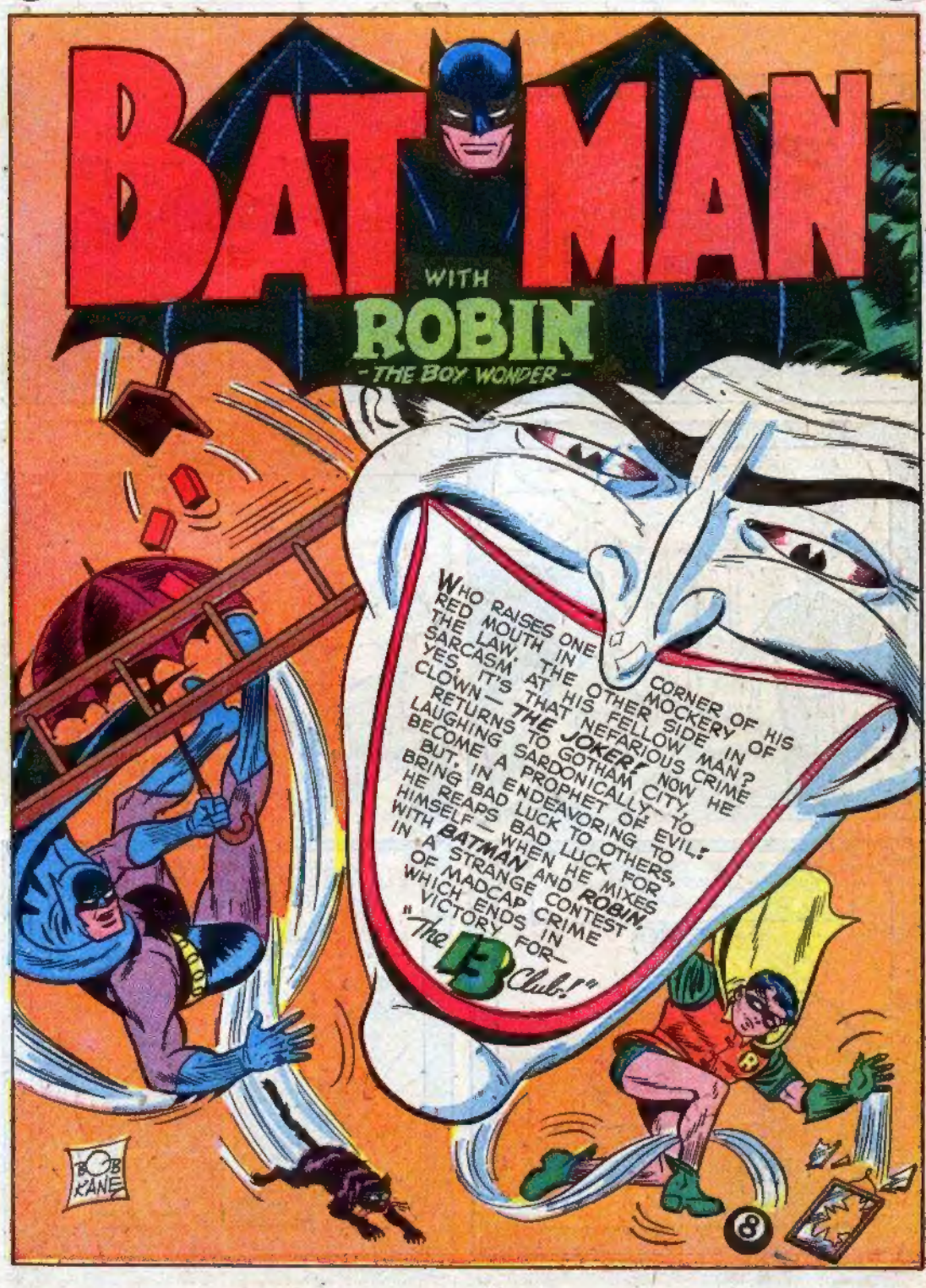
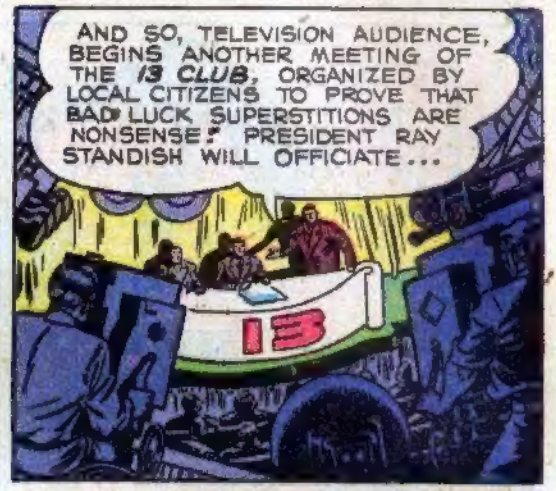
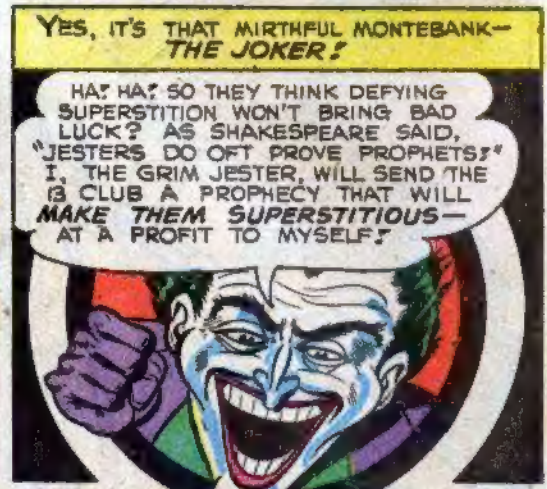

BATMAN
WITH
ROBIN
-THE BOY WONDER-
WHO RAISES ONE RED MOUTH IN SARCASM AT THE OTHER CORNER OF HIS THE LAW. THE OTHER SIDE IN MOCKERY OF HIS FELLOW MAN? YES, IT'S THAT NEFARIOUS CRIME CLOWN— THE JOKER! NOW RETURNS TO GOTHAM CITY, HE LAUGHING SARDONICALLY— TO BECOME A PROPHET OF EVIL! BUT, IN ENDEAVORING TO BRING BAD LUCK TO OTHERS, HE REAPS BAD LUCK FOR HIMSELF— WHEN HE MIXES WITH BATMAN AND ROBIN IN A STRANGE CONTEST OF MADCAP CRIME WHICH ENDS IN VICTORY FOR— "The 13 Club!"
BOB KANE
8

EVENING... AND ALL GOTHAM CITY RADIOS TUNE IN ON A STRANGE, NEW TELEVISION PROGRAM...
11-12-13 RAPS OF THE GAVEL! THE 13 CLUB WILL NOW COME TO ORDER!

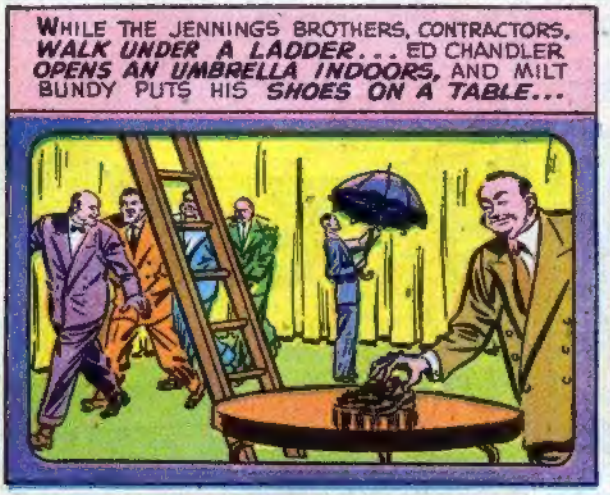

AND SO, TELEVISION AUDIENCE, BEGINS ANOTHER MEETING OF THE 13 CLUB, ORGANIZED BY LOCAL CITIZENS TO PROVE THAT BAD LUCK SUPERSTITIONS ARE NONSENSE! PRESIDENT RAY STANDISH WILL OFFICIATE...
13

AS FIRST MEMBER, I WILL DEFY SUPERSTITION— BY LETTING A BLACK CAT CROSS MY PATH!
HA! HA!


YES, IT'S THAT MIRTHFUL MONTEBANK— THE JOKER!
HA! HA! SO THEY THINK DEFYING SUPERSTITION WON'T BRING BAD LUCK? AS SHAKESPEARE SAID, "JESTERS DO OFT PROVE PROPHETS!" I, THE GRIM JESTER, WILL SEND THE 13 CLUB A PROPHECY THAT WILL MAKE THEM SUPERSTITIOUS— AT A PROFIT TO MYSELF!

AND WHILE THE JOKER PLANS— JAMES BLANNING SPILLS SALT...
SALT

...AND GRAY, MARTIN AND JONES, STORE OWNERS, LIGHT CIGARETTES— THREE ON A MATCH.... WHILE NICHOLAS NOBLE BREAKS A MIRROR!


WHILE THE JENNINGS BROTHERS, CONTRACTORS, WALK UNDER A LADDER... ED CHANDLER OPENS AN UMBRELLA INDOORS, AND MILT BUNDY PUTS HIS SHOES ON A TABLE...

AND NOW WE PRESENT A MAN WHO DEFIED SUPERSTITION BY BECOMING OUR 13TH MEMBER!... YES, WHAT IS IT, BOY?
PACKAGE FOR THE 13 CLUB! MARKED "URGENT!"

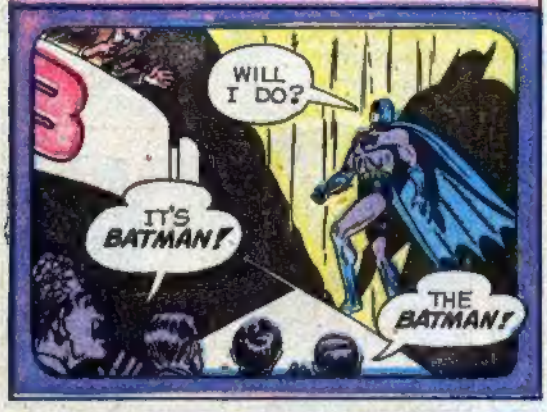
THE PACKAGE IS OPENED...
Since you invite bad luck, you invite me. Arnold superstition says that to be behind an 8-ball means black years—so, I send the 13 Club this omen!

THE JOKER! OH, MY!
WE'LL NEED PROTECTION!
GENTLEMEN! WE CAN'T ALLOW THE JOKER TO RUIN OUR CLUB! ORDER! ORDER!

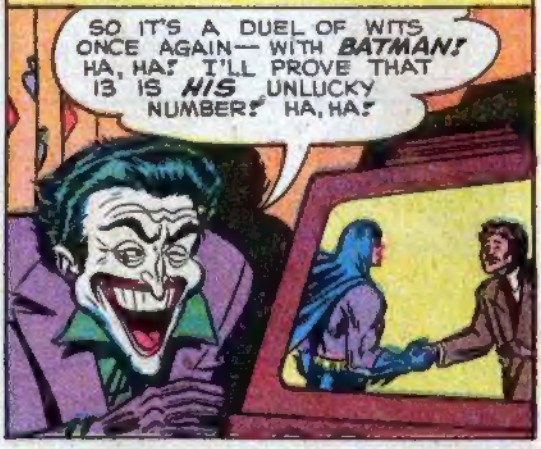
I NOW PRESENT MEMBER NUMBER 13... HENRY—
NO! I RESIGN! I'M NOT SUPERSTITIOUS — BUT IF THE JOKER'S IN ON THIS — I'M OUT!
13

DESPERATE, STANDISH TURNS TO THE TENSE AUDIENCE...
WHO AMONG YOU WILL BECOME MEMBER NUMBER 13? SURELY SOMEONE...?
13

SILENCE! AND WITHOUT A 13TH MEMBER, THE CLUB IS A FAILURE! THEN A FIRM VOICE SPEAKS...



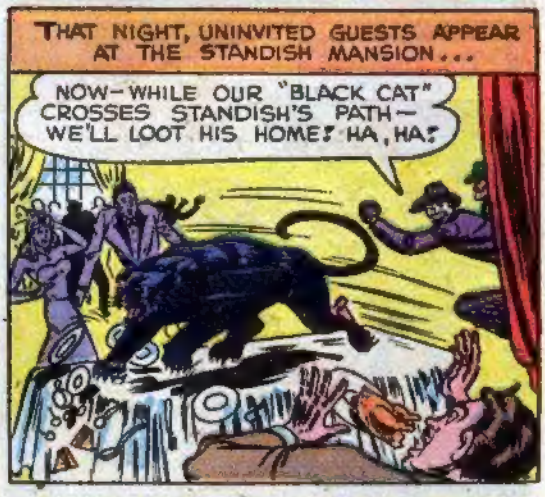
MEANWHILE, THE JOKER LISTENS IN...



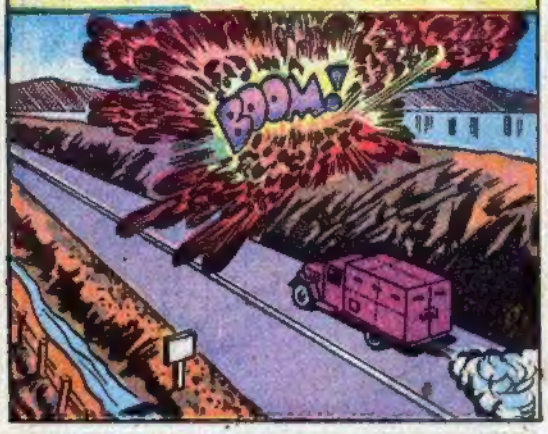
LATER, AFTER BATMAN DONS THE GARB OF BRUCE WAYNE AGAIN...

ONE MINUTE WE'RE SITTING QUIETLY IN A STUDIO AUDIENCE— THEN SUDDENLY YOU CHANGE TO BATMAN AND GO UP ON THE STAGE! WHY?
TO SEE WHAT THE JOKER IS UP TO— AND TO STOP HIM FROM RUINING THE 13 CLUB!

THAT NIGHT, UNINVITED GUESTS APPEAR AT THE STANDISH MANSION...



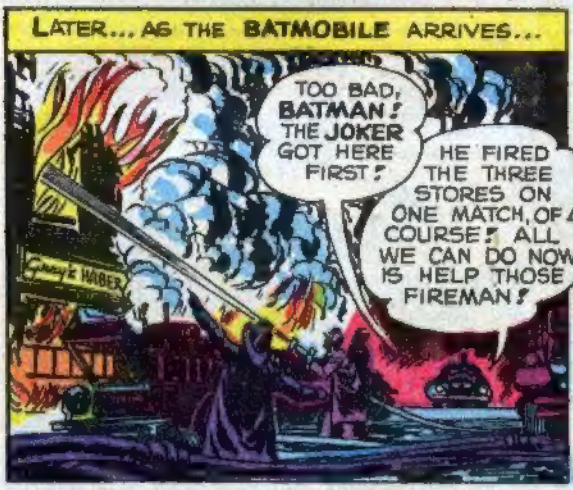
NEXT DAY, TNT. BLASTS A HOLE IN A DIKE BEING BUILT BY BLANNING, THE ENGINEER WHO SPILLED SALT...

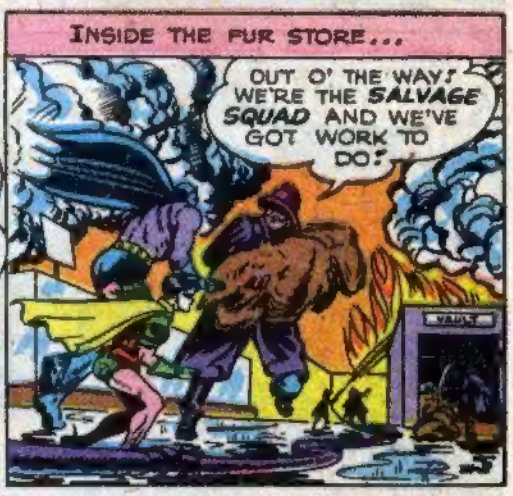


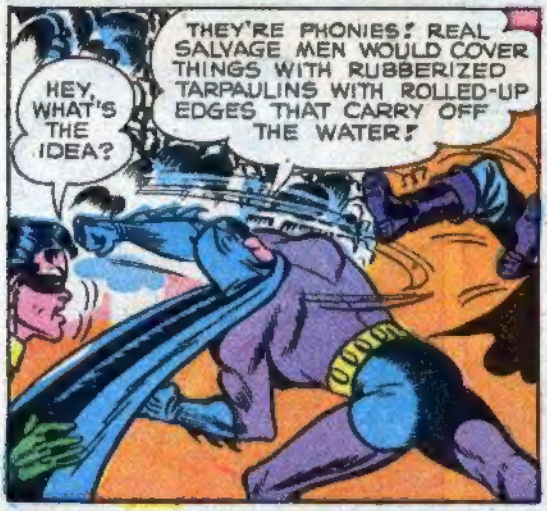
AND SALT WATER SPILLS FROM THE BAY, FLOODING THE ROAD AS A BANK TRUCK PASSES...

THAT GIGGLING GARGOYLE IS STRIKING 13 CLUB MEMBERS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE ON THE PROGRAM! FIRST, STANDISH, THEN BLANDING! NEXT —
GRAY, MARTIN AND JONES, THE STORE OWNERS WHO LIT THREE CIGARETTES ON A MATCH!

AT THAT MOMENT...
THREE STORES IN A ROW! VERY CONVENIENT! I RUN A FUSE TO EACH STORE—AND I CAN LIGHT ALL THREE ON ONE MATCH! HA! HA!
Gray's HABERDASHERY
Martin's LEATHER GOODS
JONES Fine Furs

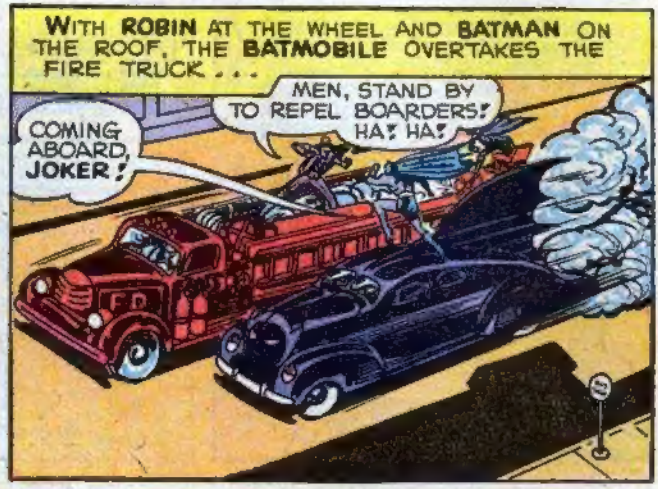

LATER... AS THE BATMOBILE ARRIVES...
TOO BAD, BATMAN! THE JOKER GOT HERE FIRST!
HE FIRED THE THREE STORES ON ONE MATCH, OF COURSE! ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS HELP THOSE FIREMAN!

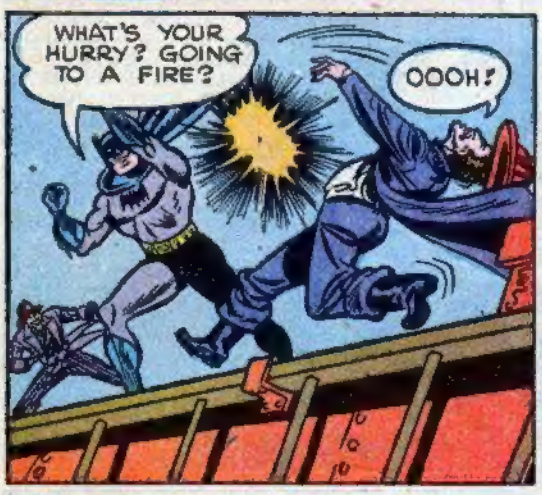

INSIDE THE FUR STORE...
OUT O' THE WAY! WE'RE THE SALVAGE SQUAD AND WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO!

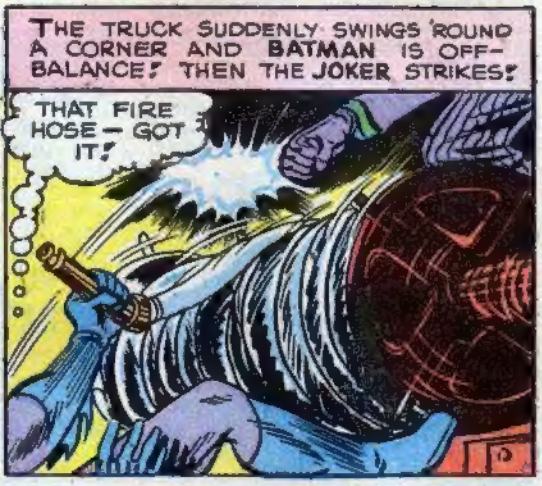

HEY, WHAT'S THE IDEA?
THEY'RE PHONIES! REAL SALVAGE MEN WOULD COVER THINGS WITH RUBBERIZED TARPAULINS WITH ROLLED-UP EDGES THAT CARRY OFF THE WATER!

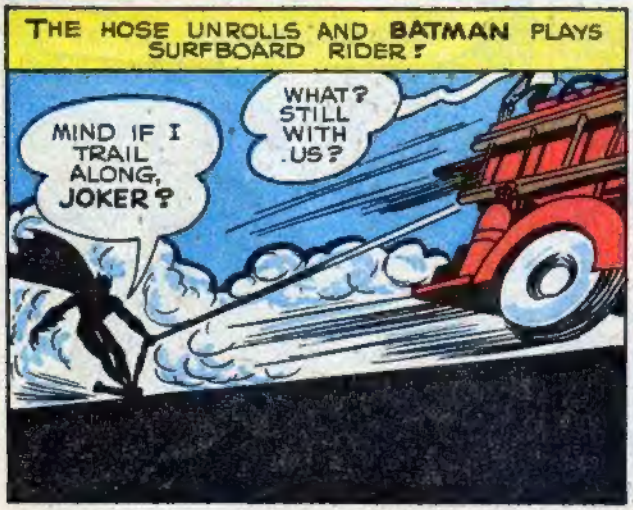
THIS'LL QUENCH YOUR THIRST FOR ACTION, BATMAN! HA! HA!

THEY'RE ESCAPING IN THE FIRE TRUCK!
THE BATMOBILE CAN RUN RINGS AROUND IT! LET'S GO!

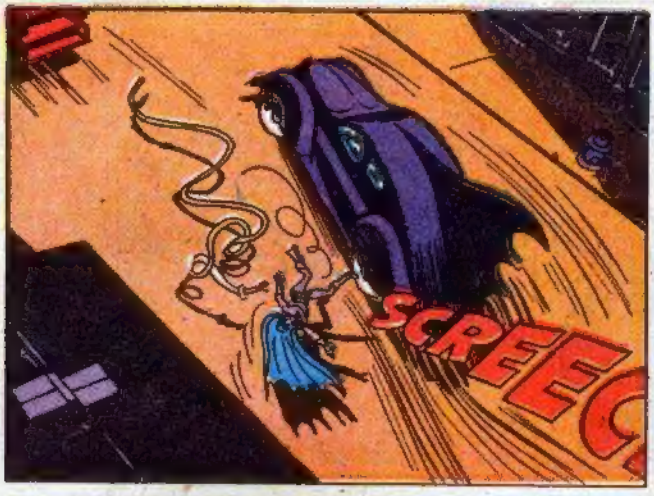

WITH ROBIN AT THE WHEEL AND BATMAN ON THE ROOF, THE BATMOBILE OVERTAKES THE FIRE TRUCK . . .
COMING ABOARD, JOKER!
MEN, STAND BY TO REPEL BOARDERS! HA! HA!


WHAT'S YOUR HURRY? GOING TO A FIRE?
OOOH!


THE TRUCK SUDDENLY SWINGS 'ROUND A CORNER AND BATMAN IS OFF-BALANCE! THEN THE JOKER STRIKES!
THAT FIRE HOSE — GOT IT!


THE HOSE UNROLLS AND BATMAN PLAYS SURFBOARD RIDER!
MIND IF I TRAIL ALONG, JOKER?
WHAT? STILL WITH US?

TOO BAD, BATMAN, BUT WE MUST SPLIT UP — FOR THE MOMENT! HA! HA!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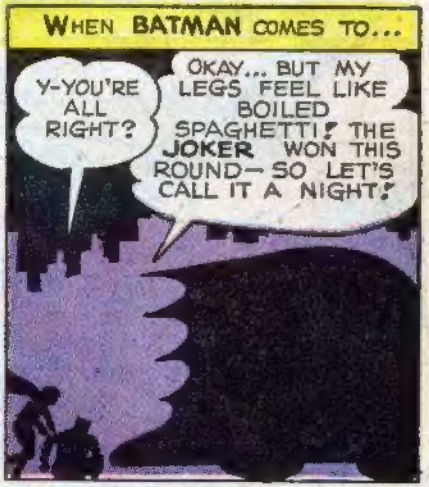
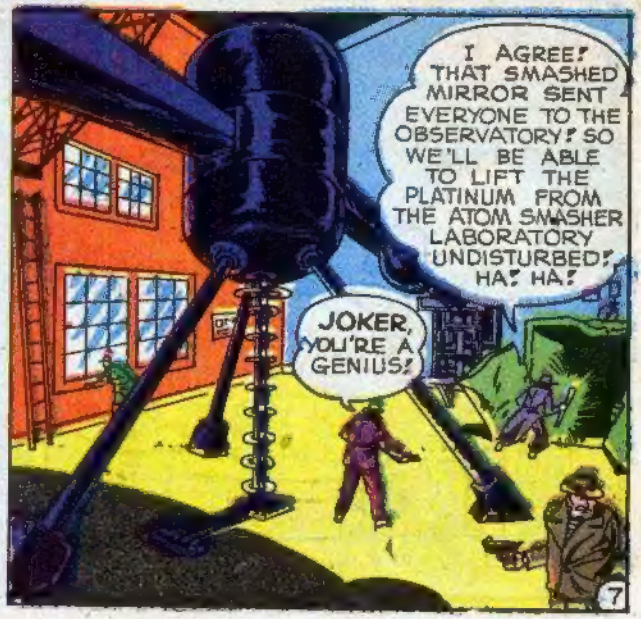

WHEN BATMAN COMES TO...
Y-YOU'RE ALL RIGHT?
OKAY... BUT MY LEGS FEEL LIKE BOILED SPAGHETTI! THE JOKER WON THIS ROUND—SO LET'S CALL IT A NIGHT!

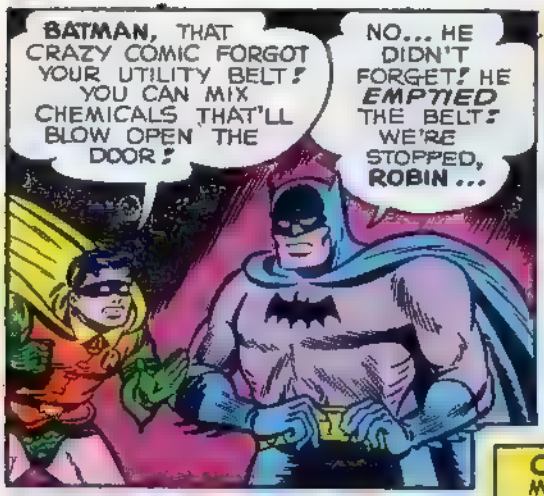
MORNING—BATMAN AND ROBIN GO TO THE STATE UNIVERSITY...
PROFESSOR NOBLE IS NEXT ON THE JOKER'S LIST! HE BROKE A MIRROR!
HEY—LOOKS LIKE EXCITEMENT OVER THERE!

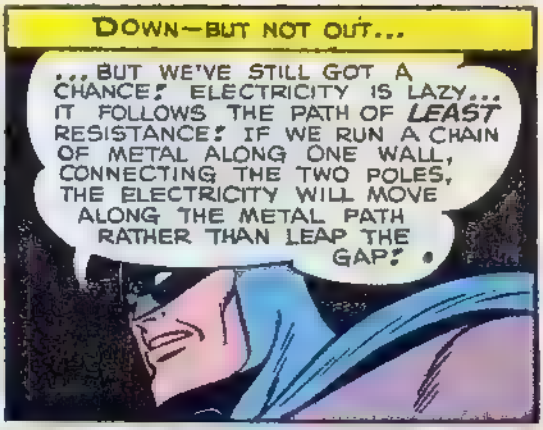
WHAT'S UP, FELLA?
OH... BATMAN! SOMEBODY SET OFF A BOMB IN THE ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY AND CRACKED THE MIRROR OF OUR TELESCOPE!

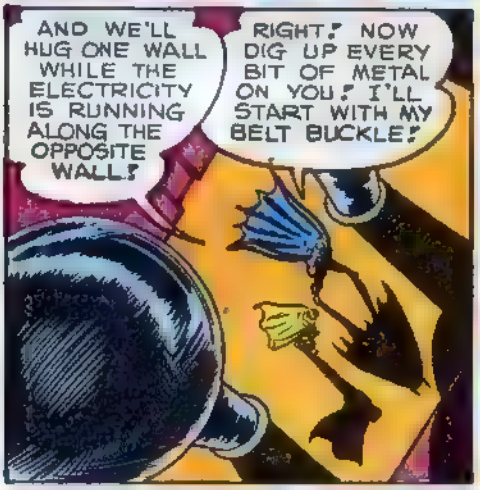
QUICK! ANYTHING IN THE OBSERVATORY LIKE GOLD OR DIAMONDS?
NO... WAIT—OUR ATOM SMASHER—WE'VE BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH PLATINUM!

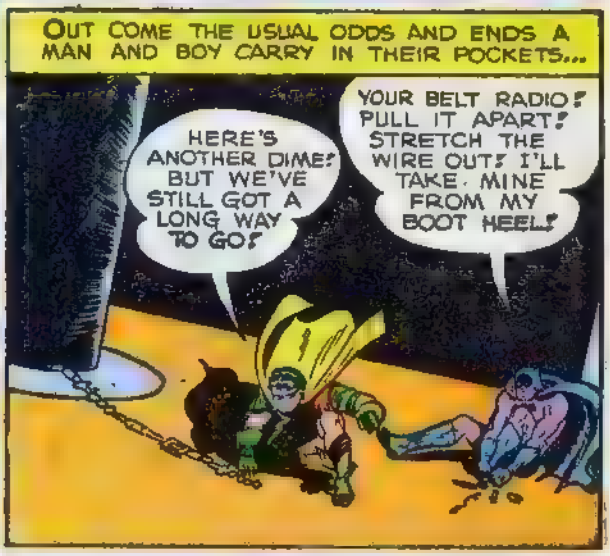

I AGREE! THAT SMASHED MIRROR SENT EVERYONE TO THE OBSERVATORY! SO WE'LL BE ABLE TO LIFT THE PLATINUM FROM THE ATOM SMASHER LABORATORY UNDISTURBED! HA! HA!
JOKER, YOU'RE A GENIUS!

BUT THE JOKER GLOATS TOO SOON!
SO YOU WANT TO BE ALONE, JOKER!
WE'LL DO SOME SMASHING— BUT IT WON'T BE ATOMS!
WHILE BATMAN TURNS TO MEET THE ATTACK OF A THUG, THE MADCAP OF MENACE SCALES THE TUBE'S INSULATORS...
HA! HA! PARDON ME WHILE I KNOCK WOOD— FOR LUCK!
MOMENTS LATER, THE DYNAMIC DUO REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS— AND LOOK ABOUT WITH HORROR!
WH-WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS?
YOU ARE LOCKED INSIDE THE PHYSICS DEPARTMENT'S LIGHTNING LABORATORY! HA! HA! THE TIMER ON THE GENERATOR IS SET TO GO OFF IN EXACTLY TEN MINUTES—THEN HIGH-VOLTAGE ELECTRICITY WILL LEAP THE 13-FOOT GAP BETWEEN THE TWO SPHERES!
YOU'RE TRAPPED IN THE ELECTRICAL FIELD! THE SPHERES WILL THROW OFF LIGHTNING SPARKS THAT'LL BURN YOU TO A CRISP! GOODBYE, BATMAN— GOOD LUCK! HA! HA! HA! HA!

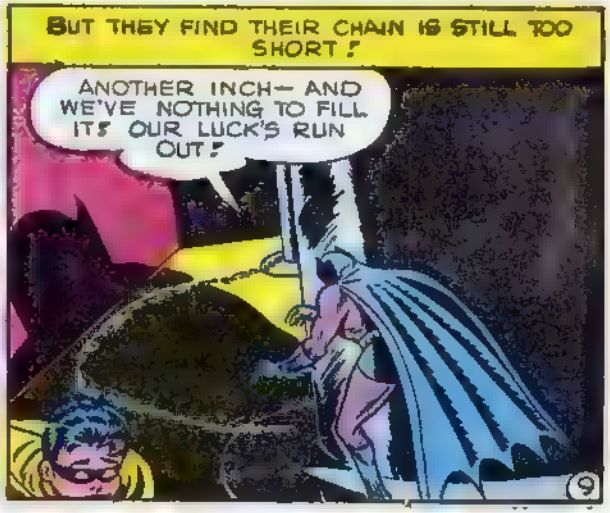

BATMAN, THAT CRAZY COMIC FORGOT YOUR UTILITY BELT! YOU CAN MIX CHEMICALS THAT'LL BLOW OPEN THE DOOR!
NO... HE DIDN'T FORGET! HE EMPTIED THE BELT! WE'RE STOPPED, ROBIN...


DOWN—BUT NOT OUT...
...BUT WE'VE STILL GOT A CHANCE! ELECTRICITY IS LAZY... IT FOLLOWS THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE! IF WE RUN A CHAIN OF METAL ALONG ONE WALL, CONNECTING THE TWO POLES, THE ELECTRICITY WILL MOVE ALONG THE METAL PATH RATHER THAN LEAP THE GAP!


AND WE'LL HUG ONE WALL WHILE THE ELECTRICITY IS RUNNING ALONG THE OPPOSITE WALL!
RIGHT! NOW DIG UP EVERY BIT OF METAL ON YOU! I'LL START WITH MY BELT BUCKLE!


OUT COME THE USUAL ODDS AND ENDS A MAN AND BOY CARRY IN THEIR POCKETS...
HERE'S ANOTHER DIME! BUT WE'VE STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO!
YOUR BELT RADIO! PULL IT APART! STRETCH THE WIRE OUT! I'LL TAKE MINE FROM MY BOOT HEEL!

THE CHAIN OF METAL GROWS! BUT ANY MINUTE NOW THE GENERATORS WILL CHARGE!
THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT—AND IT DOESN'T REACH THE OTHER TUBE!
OUR METAL WATCH BANDS! HURRY!


BUT THEY FIND THEIR CHAIN IS STILL TOO SHORT!
ANOTHER INCH— AND WE'VE NOTHING TO FILL IT! OUR LUCK'S RUN OUT!

NOT YET! LOOK WHAT I FOUND ON THE FLOOR! A PIN... AN ORDINARY STRAIGHT PIN—THAT'LL DO IT!

AND THE LITTLE PIN COMPLETES THE LIFE-LINE! JUST IN TIME— FOR, THE NEXT MOMENT, A FORK OF FLAME DANCES OVER THE METAL CHAIN!

AND AT THAT MOMENT...

THE GENERATOR'S ON! HOLY COW — AND **BATMAN** AND **ROBIN** ARE IN THERE!

THE SWITCH IS THROWN AND THE DANGER IS PAST...

I REMEMBERED ABOUT THE PLATINUM AND HURRIED OVER HERE... THEN I HEARD THE GENERATOR... WOW!

NO WONDER THEY SAY, "SEE A PIN, PICK IT UP, ALL THE DAY YOU'LL HAVE GOOD LUCK!"

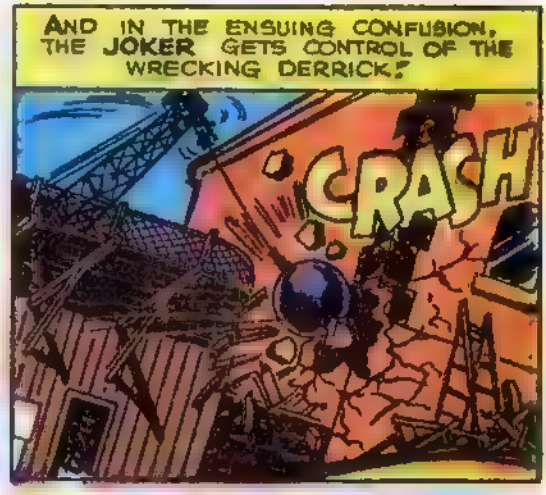
LATER...

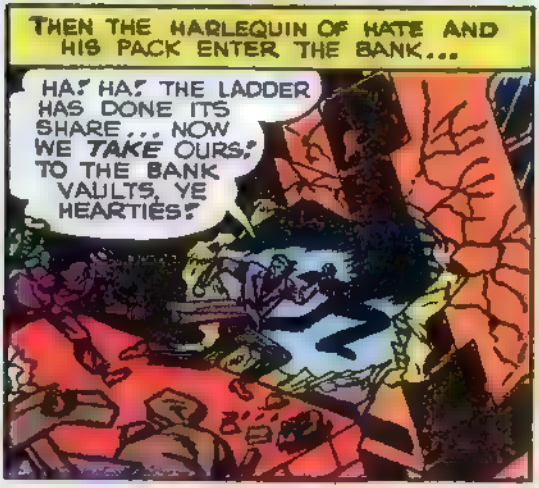
IF OUR LUCK HOLDS, WE CAN CATCH THE **JOKER** WORKING ON THE JENNINGS BROTHERS! REMEMBER— THEY WALKED UNDER A LADDER!

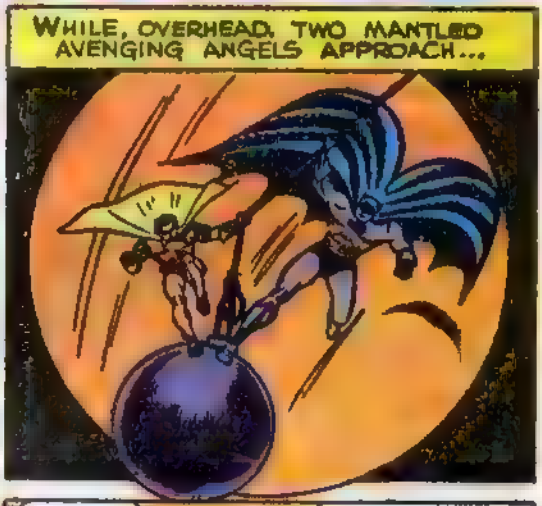
SIDE BY SIDE ARE TWO CONTRACTING JOBS BEING DONE BY THE JENNINGS BROTHERS— A SANDBLASTING AND A HOUSE-WRECKING JOB!

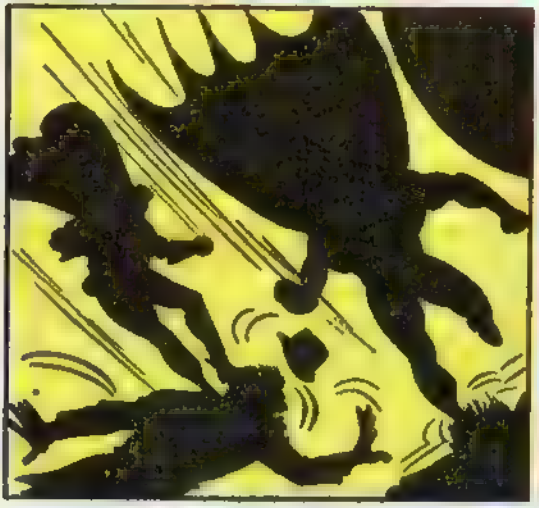
BANK

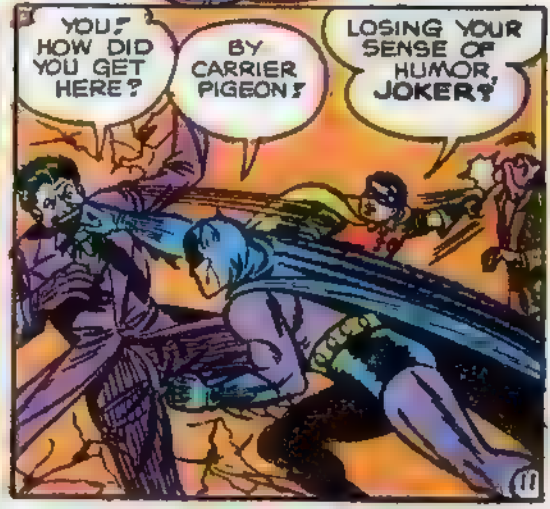
SUDDENLY, A DRIVERLESS CAR HURTLES DOWN THE STEEP HILL, SMASHES INTO THE LADDERS SUPPORTING THE SANDBLASTERS!


AND IN THE ENSUING CONFUSION, THE JOKER GETS CONTROL OF THE WRECKING DERRICK!
CRASH

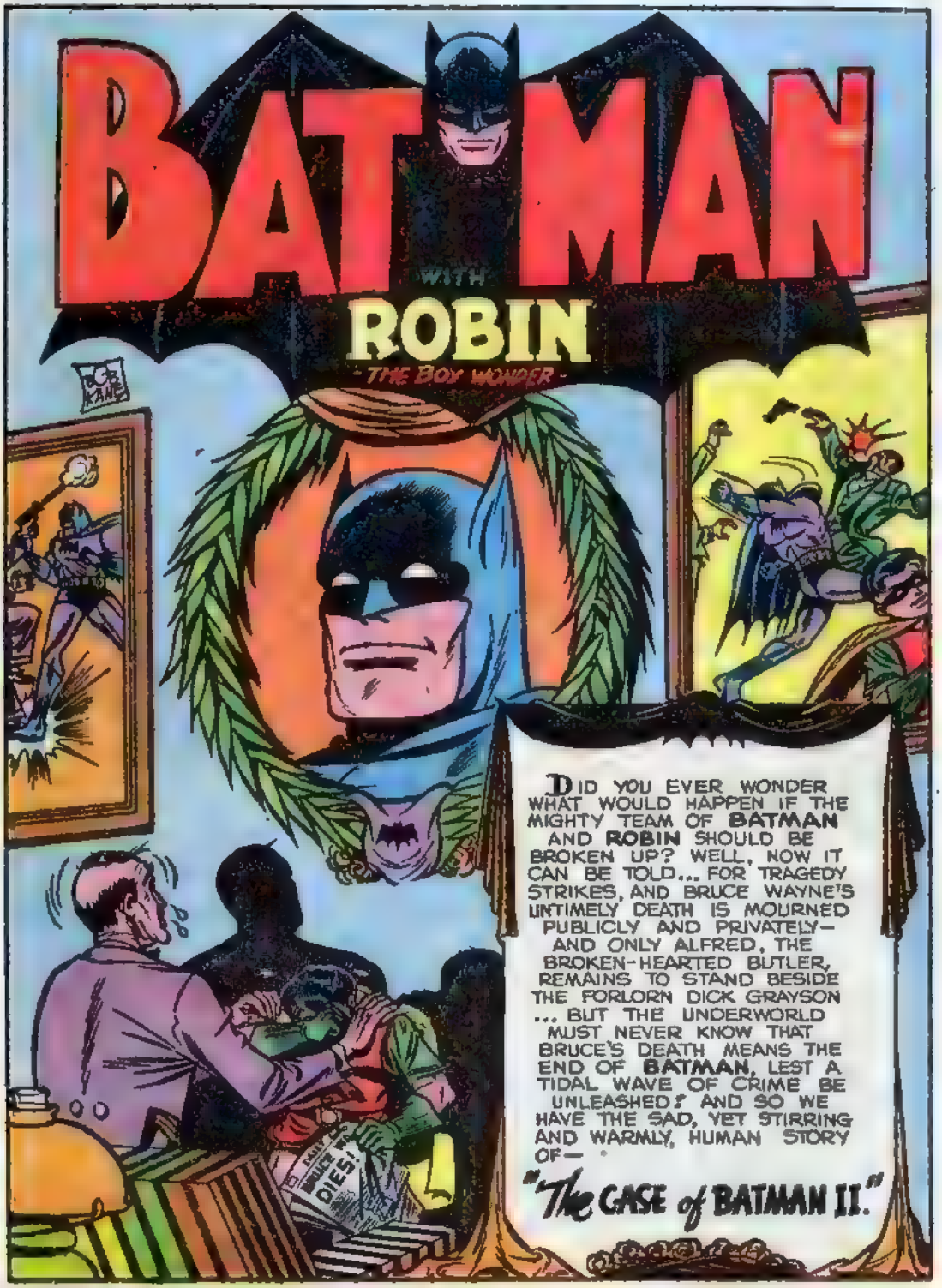

THEN THE HARLEQUIN OF HATE AND HIS PACK ENTER THE BANK...
HA! HA! THE LADDER HAS DONE ITS SHARE... NOW WE TAKE OURS! TO THE BANK VAULTS, YE HEARTIES!


WHILE, OVERHEAD, TWO MANTLED AVENGING ANGELS APPROACH...



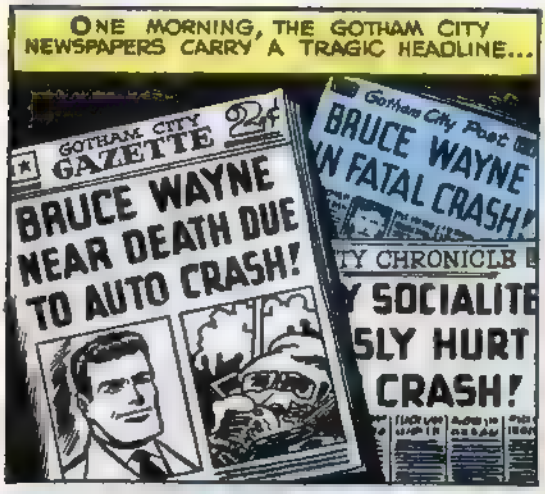

YOU! HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
BY CARRIER PIGEON!
LOSING YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR, JOKER?

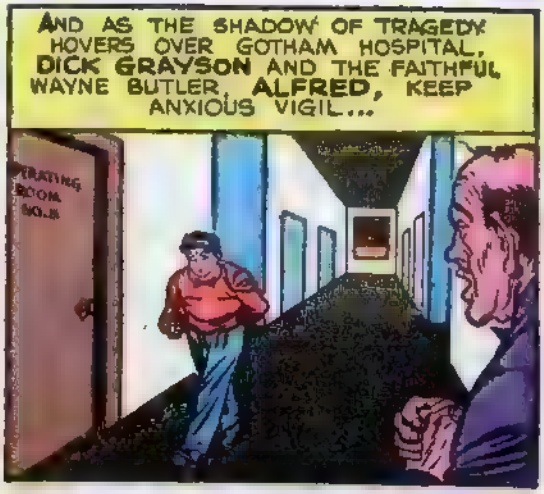
HIS LUCK IS RUNNING OUT ON HIM— COME ON!
THE JOKER'S RUNNING OUT ON US!
BOY, IS HE IN A HURRY!
WE'LL SLOW HIM DOWN... AND WITH A GOOD LUCK PIECE, TOO! HERE— WE'LL BORROW A HORSESHOE — FOR LUCK!
A RINGER!
NICE FORM!
BONK!
ANOTHER RINGER— AND WHAT A RING IT MADE!
NEXT TIME TWIST YOUR WRIST A LITTLE, YOUNG FELLER ... YA GET MORE POWER!
ONE O'CLOCK... THAT'S 13 HUNDRED ARMY TIME! SO, WE MIGHT SAY THE JOKER WAS CAUGHT AT 13 HUNDRED BY THE 13TH MEMBER OF THE 13 CLUB!
YESSIR, WE'RE IN CLOVER NOW— THE FOUR-LEAF KIND!
OOHHH! I CAN'T STAND IT! PUT ME IN JAIL... ANYPLACE... SO I WON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO ROBIN'S PUNS ANY MORE!
THE END

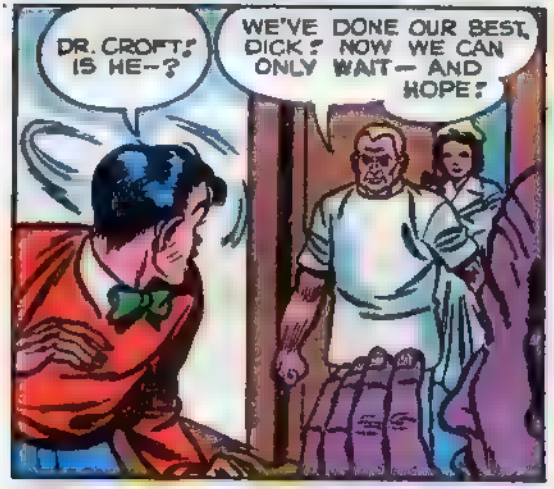


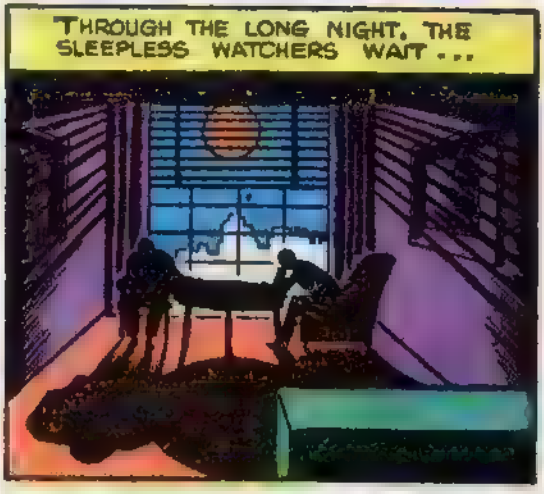
DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE MIGHTY TEAM OF **BATMAN** AND **ROBIN** SHOULD BE BROKEN UP? WELL, NOW IT CAN BE TOLD... FOR TRAGEDY STRIKES, AND BRUCE WAYNE'S UNTIMELY DEATH IS MOURNED PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY— AND ONLY ALFRED, THE BROKEN-HEARTED BUTLER, REMAINS TO STAND BESIDE THE FORLORN DICK GRAYSON ... BUT THE UNDERWORLD MUST NEVER KNOW THAT BRUCE'S DEATH MEANS THE END OF **BATMAN**, LEST A TIDAL WAVE OF CRIME BE UNLEASHED! AND SO WE HAVE THE SAD, YET STIRRING AND WARMLY, HUMAN STORY OF—

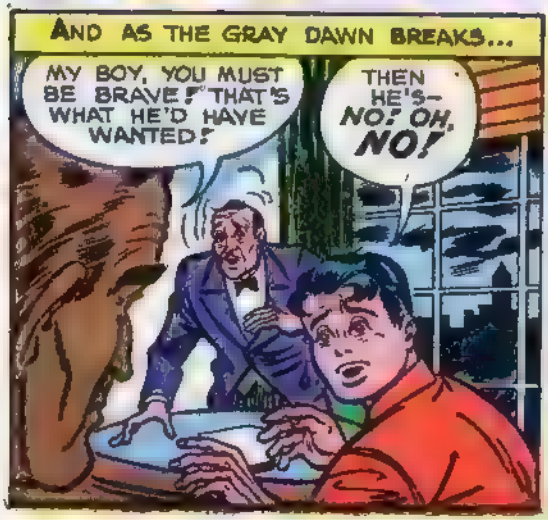
"The CASE of BATMAN II."

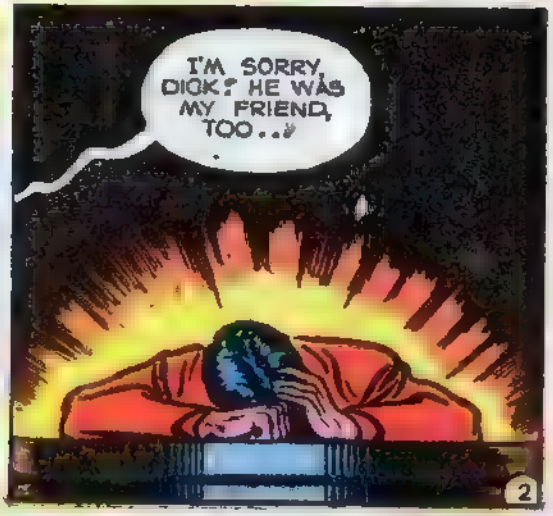

ONE MORNING, THE GOTHAM CITY NEWSPAPERS CARRY A TRAGIC HEADLINE...
GOTHAM CITY GAZETTE
BRUCE WAYNE NEAR DEATH DUE TO AUTO CRASH!
Gotham City Post
BRUCE WAYNE
N FATAL CRASH!
TY CHRONICLE
Y SOCIALITE
SLY HURT
CRASH!


AND AS THE SHADOW OF TRAGEDY HOVERS OVER GOTHAM HOSPITAL, DICK GRAYSON AND THE FAITHFUL WAYNE BUTLER, ALFRED, KEEP ANXIOUS VIGIL...

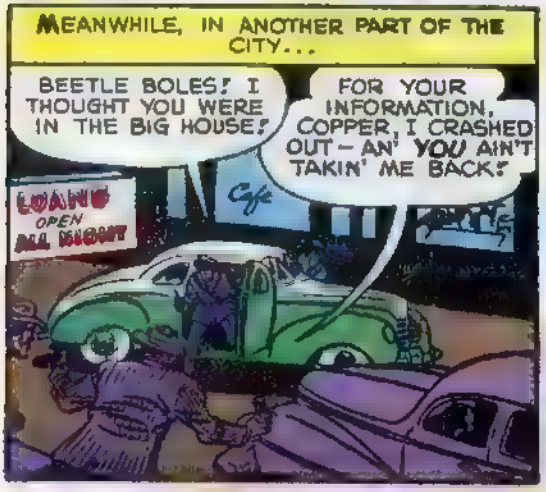

DR. CROFT! IS HE—?
WE'VE DONE OUR BEST, DICK! NOW WE CAN ONLY WAIT— AND HOPE!

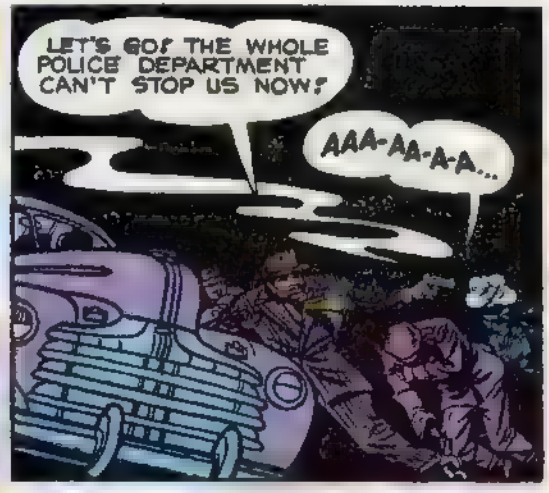

THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT, THE SLEEPLESS WATCHERS WAIT...

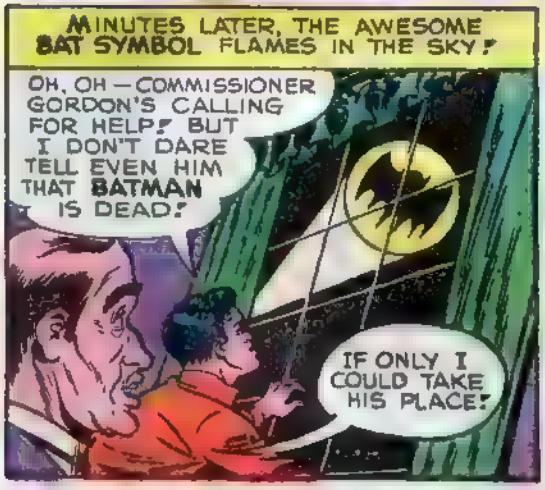

AND AS THE GRAY DAWN BREAKS...
MY BOY, YOU MUST BE BRAVE! THAT'S WHAT HE'D HAVE WANTED!
THEN HE'S— NO! OH, NO!


I'M SORRY, DICK! HE WAS MY FRIEND, TOO...

BRUCE WAYNE IS DEAD! SCREAM THE HEADLINES...AND SOME DAYS LATER, IN THE BLEAK MANSION HE ONCE INHABITED...
MR. HENRY BUSH, SIR—THE LATE MR. WAYNE'S LAWYER!
HUH...?
SO SAD! TSK, TSK! AS EXECUTOR OF MR. WAYNE'S VAST ESTATE, WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE ME READ THE WILL?
WILL?... OH, YES...
AND AS THE BUSTLING LAWYER DEPARTS...
WHAT A GREAT MAN MR. WAYNE WAS, SIR! HIS AFFAIRS ARRANGED AS IF HE KNEW HIS LIFE MIGHT END AT ANY MOMENT!
NOT QUITE, ALFRED!
HE DIDN'T PROVIDE ANOTHER BATMAN—AND WE NEED ONE! THE UNDERWORLD MUST NEVER KNOW THAT BATMAN DIED WHEN BRUCE WENT!
HOW TRUE, MAWSTER DICK! BUT NO ONE CAN EVER TAKE BATMAN'S PLACE!
A SECOND BATMAN? THE IDEA SEEMS PREPOSTEROUS TO THE BEREFT BOY AND THE BUTLER, WHO WANDER THROUGH THE BATMAN'S HALL OF TROPHIES...
I'VE GOT TO CARRY ON ALONE—BUT IT'S A BIG ORDER!
REMEMBER THIS CASE, ALFRED? YOU SAVED BATMAN'S LIFE—AND NEARLY LOST YOUR OWN!
IF ONLY I COULD HAVE—(SNIFF)—GIVEN MY LIFE—(SNIFF)—FOR HIM THIS TIME!
3


MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY...
BEETLE BOLES! I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN THE BIG HOUSE!
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, COPPER, I CRASHED OUT—AN' YOU AIN'T TAKIN' ME BACK!
LOANS OPEN ALL NIGHT
Cafe


LET'S GO! THE WHOLE POLICE DEPARTMENT CAN'T STOP US NOW!
AAA-AA-A-A...


MINUTES LATER, THE AWESOME BAT SYMBOL FLAMES IN THE SKY!
OH, OH—COMMISSIONER GORDON'S CALLING FOR HELP! BUT I DON'T DARE TELL EVEN HIM THAT BATMAN IS DEAD!
IF ONLY I COULD TAKE HIS PLACE!

SHORTLY...
ROBIN! THANKS FOR COMING! BUT— WHERE'S BATMAN?
I'M ON DOUBLE DUTY TONIGHT, COMMISSIONER GORDON! BATMAN'S— ER—BUSY!

BEETLE BOLES IS ON THE LOOSE! HE KILLED A POLICEMAN TONIGHT! WE'VE GOT A LEAD— BUT YOU CAN'T TACKLE HIM AND HIS MOB ALONE!
I'M NOT AFRAID! LET ME TRY!

I DON'T QUESTION YOUR COURAGE, ROBIN— BUT NO ONE BUT BATMAN COULD STOP BOLES SINGLE-HANDED! I'LL GIVE YOU THE DETAILS WHEN BATMAN'S WITH YOU!
WELL... IF YOU INSIST! I'LL BRING THE BATMAN HERE TOMORROW!

QUITE AN ORDER ROBIN HAS UNDERTAKEN TO FILL! WITH BRUCE WAYNE GONE, WHERE WILL HE FIND ANOTHER BATMAN? TRUE, A MAN OF FAULTLESS PHYSIQUE AND KEEN MIND MIGHT, AFTER YEARS OF INTENSIVE TRAINING, COME CLOSE TO THE QUALIFICATIONS... BUT ROBIN HAS ONLY 24 HOURS!

NEXT MORNING...

BUT MAWSTER DICK, THIS IS A FUTILE QUEST! NO ONE COULD POSSIBLY FILL THE REQUIREMENTS!

WE'LL SEE! THIS PLACE IS PATRONIZED BY AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES! MAYBE...

JASPER'S GYM

ACROBATS! ADEQUATE FOR THE VAUDEVILLE STAGE, BUT NOT FOR OUR PURPOSE!

THEY AREN'T THE TYPE ANYWAY!

BATMAN COULD LIFT TWO LIKE THAT— ONE IN EITHER HAND!

MAYBE THIS FELLOW CAN, TOO— BUT HE'S TOO MUSCLE-BOUND FOR FAST ACTION!

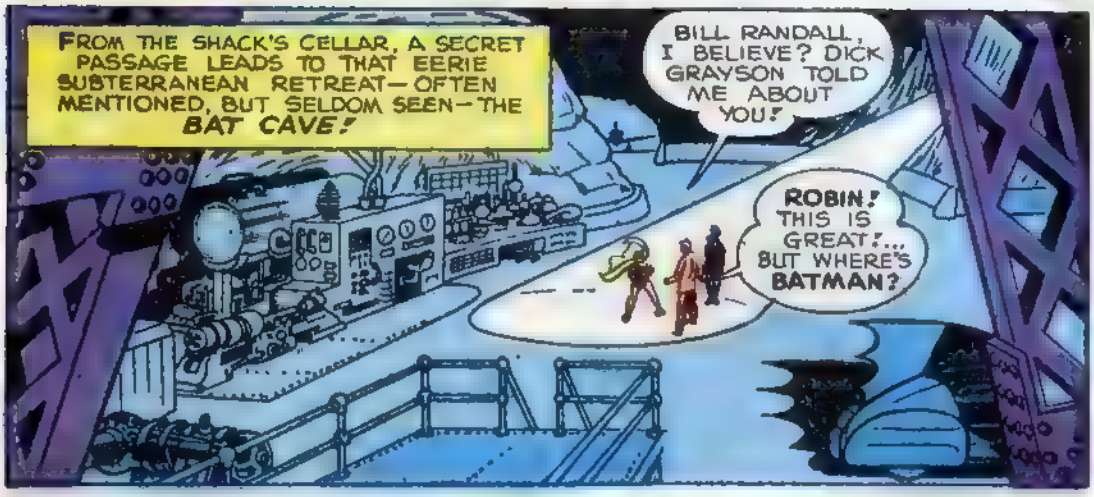
EXTRAORDINARY! I HAVE SEEN BATMAN —ER, MR. WAYNE— DO THAT MANY TIMES!

WHAT'S MORE, HE'S ABOUT THE SAME SIZE, BUILD AND GENERAL APPEARANCE AS BRUCE! IF ONLY HE CAN PASS THE OTHER TESTS!

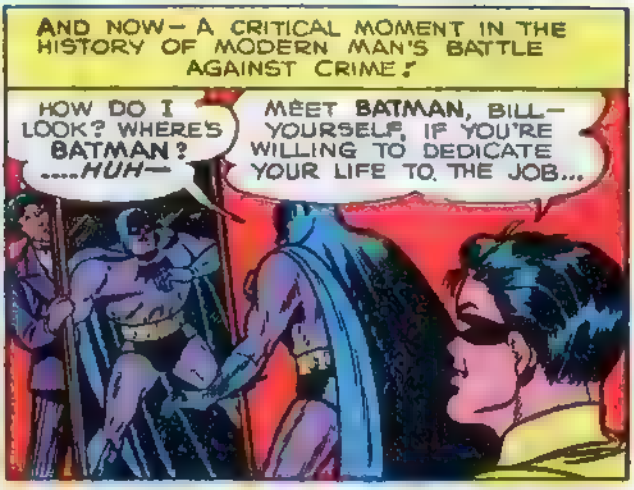
MIND, SIR, I'M NOT SAYING HE'S AS GOOD AS THE LATE MAWSTER —BUT HE ISN'T BAD!

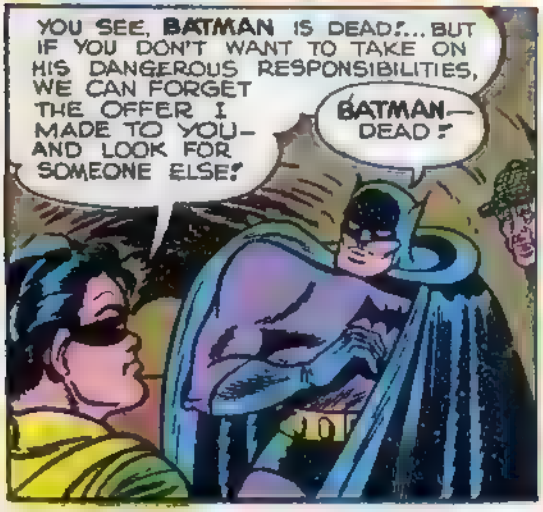
HE CERTAINLY ISN'T, ALFRED!

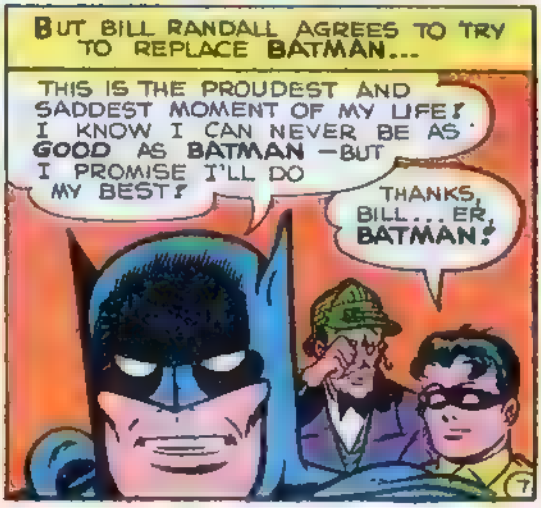
MY NAME'S DICK GRAYSON! MIND IF I ASK YOU SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS?
FIRE AWAY! I'M BILL RANDALL—AND I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE!
ARE YOU MARRIED? ARE YOU A PROFESSIONAL ACROBAT? HAVE YOU A JOB THAT TIES YOU DOWN?
ONE "NO" ANSWERS THEM ALL! I'M SINGLE—AN AMATEUR ATHLETE—AND MY BUSINESS PRACTICALLY RUNS ITSELF!
YOUR AERIAL SOMERSAULTS REMINDED ME OF SOME I SAW BATMAN DO!
THAT'S THE FINEST COMPLIMENT I'VE EVER HAD! I'VE LONG ADMIRED THE BATMAN!
IF YOU'LL COME TO THIS ADDRESS IN AN HOUR—ALONE—YOU'LL MEET HIM!
YOU'RE NOT KIDDING, GRAYSON? THANKS A MILLION!
AN HOUR LATER, BILL RANDALL KNOCKS AT THE DOOR OF A DILAPIDATED SHACK ON A BACK STREET...
AND IMMEDIATELY...
HELLO! HAVEN'T I SEEN YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPERS AS THE MYSTERIOUS SLEUTH WHO HAS SOLVED SEVERAL STRANGE CRIMES?
YOUR POWERS OF OBSERVATION ARE ADMIRABLE, SIR! COME IN!

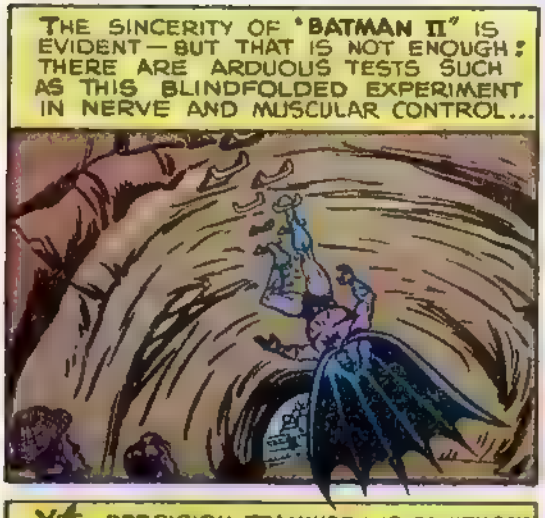

FROM THE SHACK'S CELLAR, A SECRET PASSAGE LEADS TO THAT EERIE SUBTERRANEAN RETREAT—OFTEN MENTIONED, BUT SELDOM SEEN—THE BAT CAVE!
BILL RANDALL, I BELIEVE? DICK GRAYSON TOLD ME ABOUT YOU!
ROBIN! THIS IS GREAT!... BUT WHERE'S BATMAN?

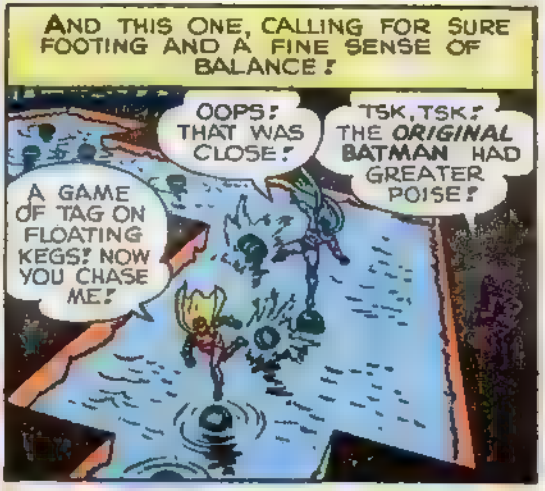
YOU'LL SEE HIM IN A MOMENT—BUT FIRST, PUT THIS ON!
A BATMAN UNIFORM! I'LL ENJOY THIS!

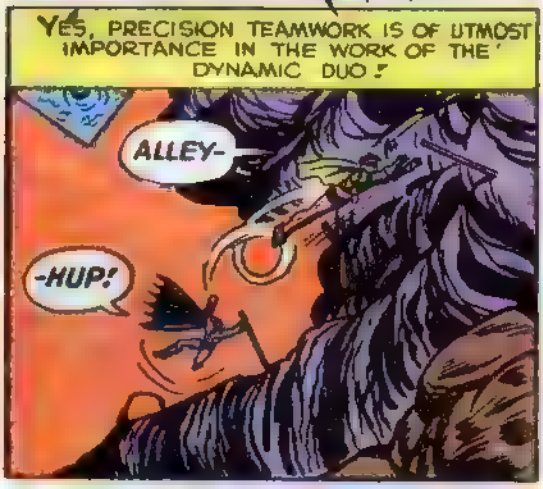

AND NOW—A CRITICAL MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN MAN'S BATTLE AGAINST CRIME!
HOW DO I LOOK? WHERE'S BATMAN? .....HUH—
MEET BATMAN, BILL—YOURSELF, IF YOU'RE WILLING TO DEDICATE YOUR LIFE TO THE JOB...

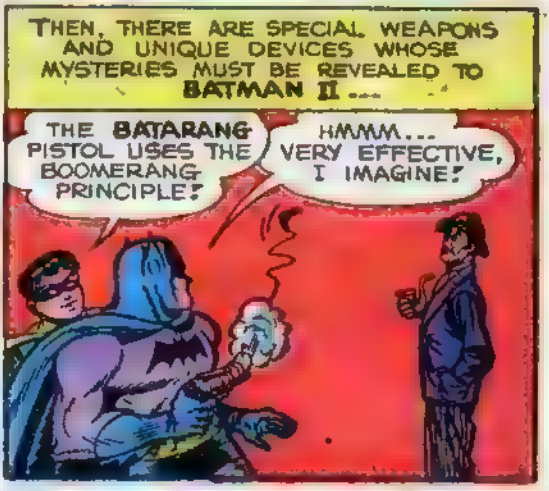

YOU SEE, BATMAN IS DEAD!... BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE ON HIS DANGEROUS RESPONSIBILITIES, WE CAN FORGET THE OFFER I MADE TO YOU—AND LOOK FOR SOMEONE ELSE!
BATMAN—DEAD!


BUT BILL RANDALL AGREES TO TRY TO REPLACE BATMAN...
THIS IS THE PROUDEST AND SADDEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE! I KNOW I CAN NEVER BE AS GOOD AS BATMAN—BUT I PROMISE I'LL DO MY BEST!
THANKS, BILL... ER, BATMAN!

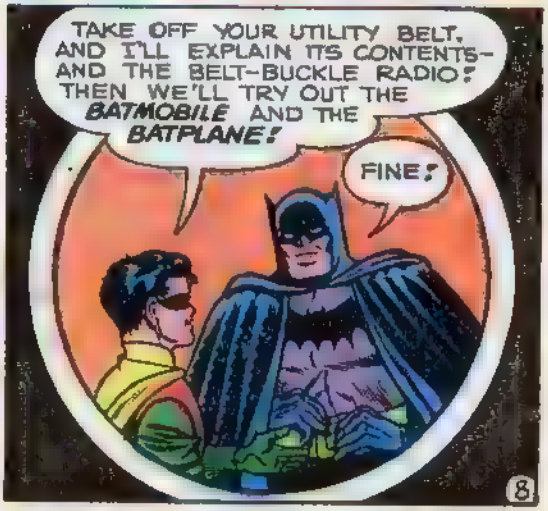

THE SINCERITY OF "BATMAN II" IS EVIDENT—BUT THAT IS NOT ENOUGH! THERE ARE ARDUOUS TESTS SUCH AS THIS BLINDFOLDED EXPERIMENT IN NERVE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL...


AND THIS ONE, CALLING FOR SURE FOOTING AND A FINE SENSE OF BALANCE!
OOPS! THAT WAS CLOSE!
TSK, TSK! THE ORIGINAL BATMAN HAD GREATER POISE!
A GAME OF TAG ON FLOATING KEGS! NOW YOU CHASE ME!

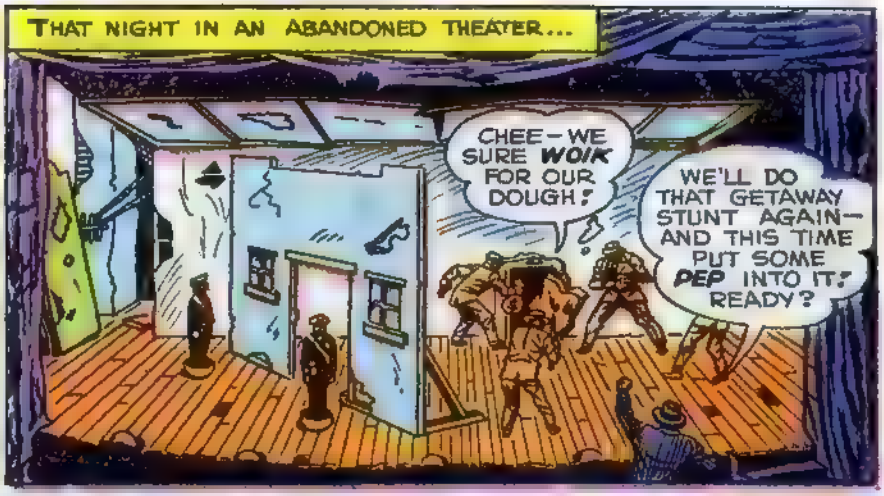

YES, PRECISION TEAMWORK IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN THE WORK OF THE DYNAMIC DUO!
ALLEY-
-HUP!

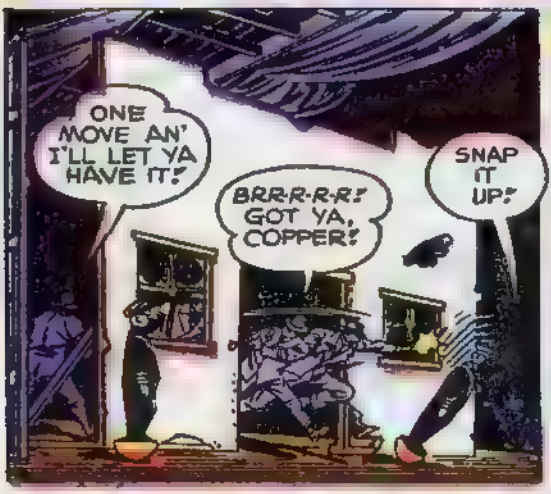

THEN, THERE ARE SPECIAL WEAPONS AND UNIQUE DEVICES WHOSE MYSTERIES MUST BE REVEALED TO BATMAN II...
THE BATARANG PISTOL USES THE BOOMERANG PRINCIPLE!
HMMM... VERY EFFECTIVE, I IMAGINE!

MY WORD! HOW CLUMSY OF HIM!
YES, INDEED— VERY EFFECTIVE!

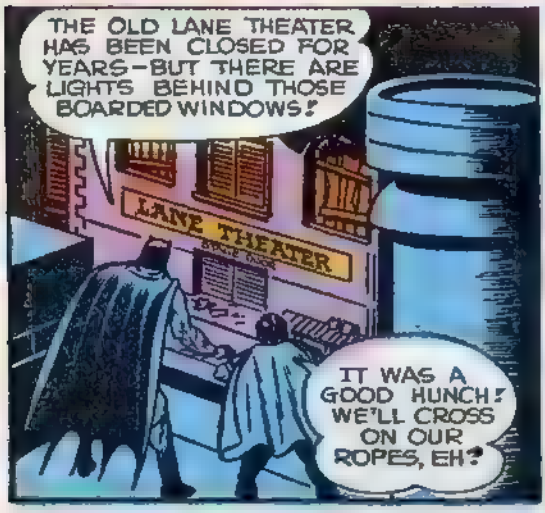

TAKE OFF YOUR UTILITY BELT, AND I'LL EXPLAIN ITS CONTENTS— AND THE BELT-BUCKLE RADIO! THEN WE'LL TRY OUT THE BATMOBILE AND THE BATPLANE!
FINE!

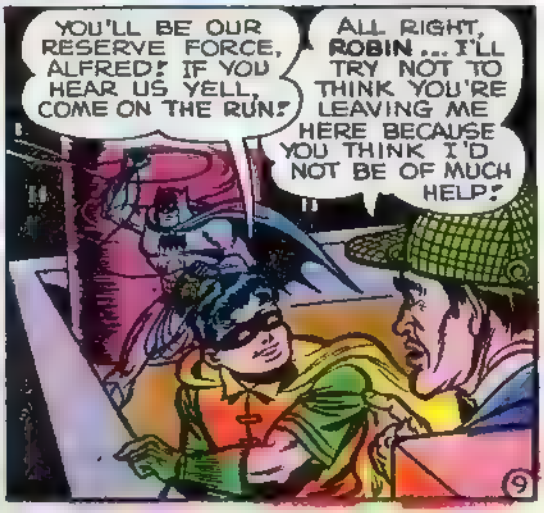
AND THE VALUE OF REHEARSAL FOR IMPORTANT ACTION IS APPRECIATED ALSO BY BEETLE BOLES, MASTER OF SAVAGE UNDERWORLD STRATEGY!


THAT NIGHT IN AN ABANDONED THEATER...
CHEE—WE SURE WOIK FOR OUR DOUGH!
WE'LL DO THAT GETAWAY STUNT AGAIN—AND THIS TIME PUT SOME PEP INTO IT! READY?

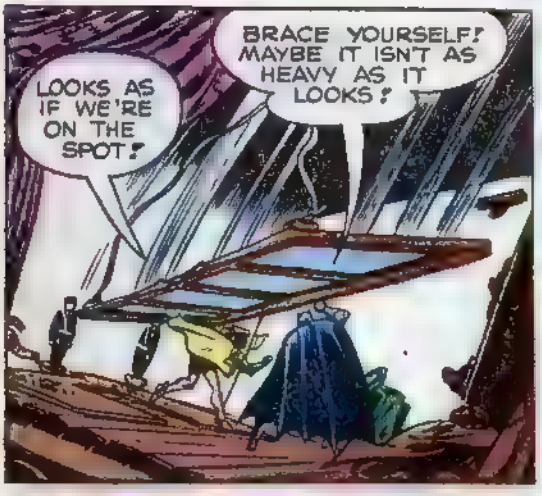


AND NOT FAR AWAY...
COMMISSIONER GORDON MENTIONED UNDERWORLD RUMORS THAT BEETLE'S GOING "THEATRICAL"— SO WE'LL PLAY OUR HUNCH!
MY WORD! I CAME ALONG TO COACH "BATMAN II"—BUT IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO KEEP UP WITH HIM!

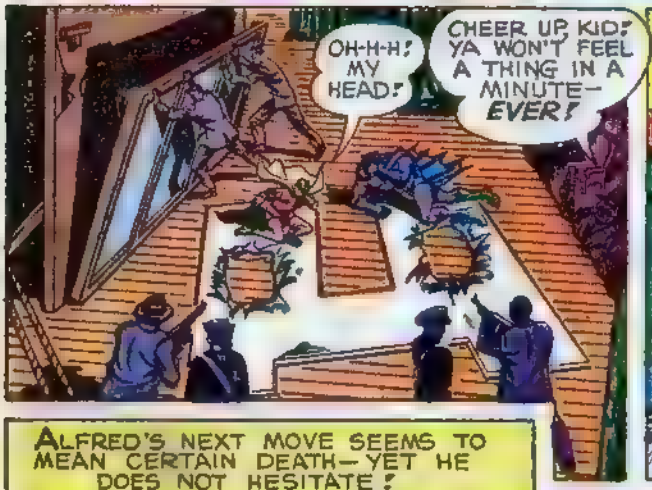

THE OLD LANE THEATER HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR YEARS—BUT THERE ARE LIGHTS BEHIND THOSE BOARDED WINDOWS!
LANE THEATER
IT WAS A GOOD HUNCH! WE'LL CROSS ON OUR ROPES, EH?

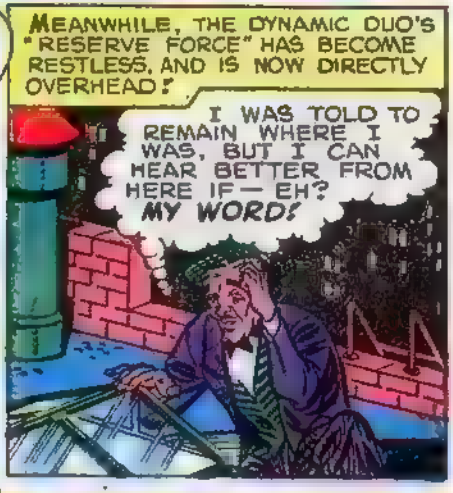

YOU'LL BE OUR RESERVE FORCE, ALFRED! IF YOU HEAR US YELL, COME ON THE RUN!
ALL RIGHT, ROBIN ... I'LL TRY NOT TO THINK YOU'RE LEAVING ME HERE BECAUSE YOU THINK I'D NOT BE OF MUCH HELP!

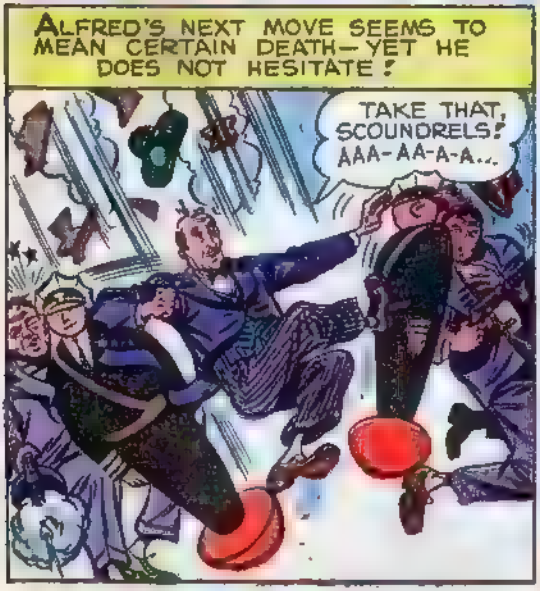
INSIDE THE PLAYHOUSE...
BUT, BEETLE, HOW CAN WE PRETEND DEY'RE REAL COPS WIT' REAL GUNS— WHEN DEY AIN'T?
USE YOUR IMAGINATION, FOOL! IMAGINE BATMAN'S POUNCIN' ON YA, AN' THE HOT SEAT'S WAITIN'...
SUDDENLY....
WHY IMAGINE IT? LET'S BE REALISTIC!
YIIIII!
I'LL FIX YA, SMARTY!
CRACK THAT SAFE!
PARDON MY HEEL, HEEL!
WE'LL TURN DA TOMMYGUNS ON 'EM!
NOW YOU CAN TELL THE JUDGE I FRAMED YOU— WITH WINDOW FRAMES!
BEETLE BOLES FIRES— NOT AT THE CAPED WARRIORS, BUT AT A TAUT ROPE UPSTAGE! AND ABRUPTLY...
INTO THE WINGS, LUGS! I'LL PIN 'EM DOWN!

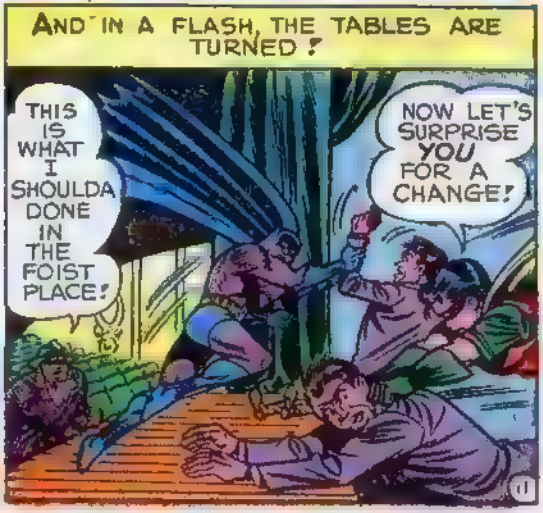

LOOKS AS IF WE'RE ON THE SPOT!
BRACE YOURSELF! MAYBE IT ISN'T AS HEAVY AS IT LOOKS!

WE GOT 'EM! GRAB THOSE GUNS— AN' THE REST OF YOU LIFT THAT HUNK OF STUFF! BE CAREFUL!
WHAM!


OH-H-H! MY HEAD!
CHEER UP, KID! YA WON'T FEEL A THING IN A MINUTE— EVER!


MEANWHILE, THE DYNAMIC DUO'S "RESERVE FORCE" HAS BECOME RESTLESS, AND IS NOW DIRECTLY OVERHEAD!
I WAS TOLD TO REMAIN WHERE I WAS, BUT I CAN HEAR BETTER FROM HERE IF— EH? MY WORD!


ALFRED'S NEXT MOVE SEEMS TO MEAN CERTAIN DEATH— YET HE DOES NOT HESITATE!
TAKE THAT, SCOUNDRELS! AAA-AA-A-A...

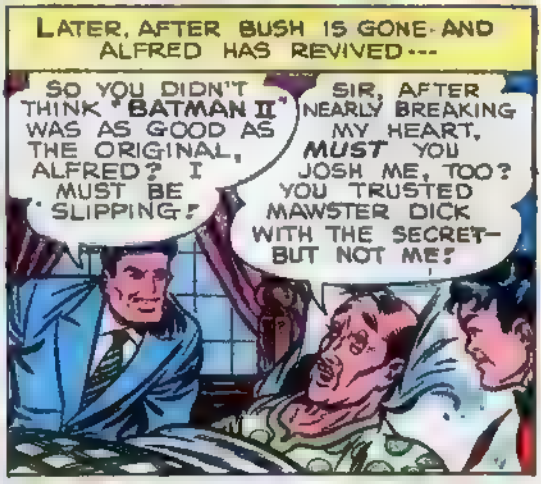

AND IN A FLASH, THE TABLES ARE TURNED!
THIS IS WHAT I SHOULDA DONE IN THE FOIST PLACE!
NOW LET'S SURPRISE YOU FOR A CHANGE!

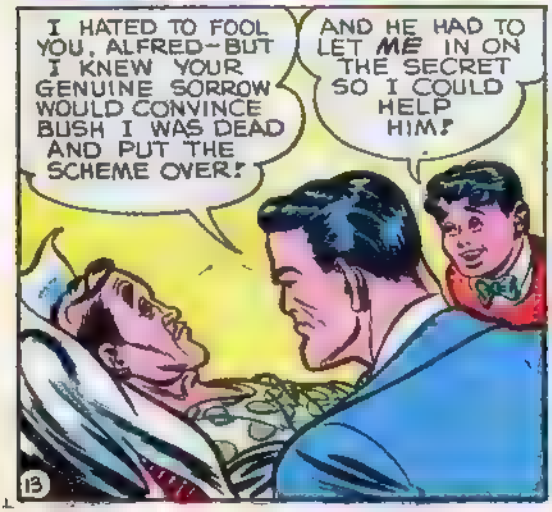
NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE JU-JITSU TO SPEED THINGS UP!
YOU AND YOUR PALS SHOULD BE CLOSER, BEETLE!
AND FOR BEETLE BOLES & CO.— IT'S ALL OVER BUT THE ELECTROCUTION!
WH-WHERE AM I?
YOU 'OUGHT TO BE IN THE HALL OF FAME, ALFRED! ... I'LL CALL THE POLICE—THEN RUN A LITTLE ERRAND, AND SEE YOU LATER!
LATER, AFTER THE CROOKS ARE SAFELY JAILED...
YOU'RE A HERO, ALFRED! BUT FOR YOU, ROBIN AND THE NEW BATMAN WOULD BOTH BE DEAD!
I SUPPOSE SO! (SIGH) BUT WHY COULDN'T I HAVE GIVEN MY LIFE FOR THE REAL BATMAN? (SIGH) THIS NEW ONE IS ONLY A PALLID IMITATION, SIR!
AT HOME, THEY FIND THE LAWYER, MR. BUSH, WAITING ....
HELLO, DICK! I'VE COME TO READ THE WILL...
HELLO, MR. BUSH! COME ON IN...
TEARS STREAM DOWN ALFRED'S CHEEKS AS BRUCE WAYNE'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT IS READ...
"... AND SUCH ALLOWANCE SHALL BE MADE TO SAID DICK GRAYSON; AND THE FOLLOWING AMOUNTS TO THE LANE RESEARCH FOUNDATION ..."
NO MORE GENEROUS MAN EVER LIVED THAN THE LATE MR. WAYNE!
SUDDENLY...
IT'S— UH-H-H MR. WAYNE!
BUSH, YOU'RE A CROOK!
BRUCE!
12

IT CAN'T BE! YOU'RE DEAD!
DON'T YOU WISH I WERE! MY DEATH WAS A TRAP, SET FOR YOU— WITH THE HELP OF THE POLICE AND THE HOSPITAL —BECAUSE OF RUMORS THAT YOU WEREN'T AS HONEST AS YOU SHOULD BE!

THE LANE FOUNDATION YOU INSERTED INTO MY WILL IS A PHONEY CORPORATION CONTROLLED BY YOU, BUSH! THROUGH IT, YOU WOULD HAVE DRAINED OFF THE MONEY I MEANT TO GO TO LEGITIMATE RESEARCH AND CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS.

TO TEST YOU, I HAD TO CONVINCE YOU I WAS DEAD! TONIGHT, I HEARD THE PROOF FROM YOUR OWN LIPS THAT YOU ARE DISHONEST!
YES, I CHANGED YOUR WILL, WAYNE! BUT DON'T—PLEASE—DON'T SEND ME TO JAIL!


LATER, AFTER BUSH IS GONE AND ALFRED HAS REVIVED---
SO YOU DIDN'T THINK "BATMAN II" WAS AS GOOD AS THE ORIGINAL, ALFRED? I MUST BE SLIPPING!
SIR, AFTER NEARLY BREAKING MY HEART, MUST YOU JOSH ME, TOO? YOU TRUSTED MAWSTER DICK WITH THE SECRET— BUT NOT ME!


I HATED TO FOOL YOU, ALFRED—BUT I KNEW YOUR GENUINE SORROW WOULD CONVINCE BUSH I WAS DEAD AND PUT THE SCHEME OVER!
AND HE HAD TO LET ME IN ON THE SECRET SO I COULD HELP HIM!
13

SAY NO MORE! WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN — AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS!
TOGETHER FOR ALWAYS— THROUGH THICK AND THIN!
The END

PROF. PIPP—
WHOLESALE DEALER IN STAR DUST, AND AN ASTROLOGICAL ORACLE OF THE FUTURE OF WHOM THERE ARE NONE ORACLER—!
THIS IS A MONTH DURING WHICH THE PLANETARY ASPECTS WILL BE MOST FAVORABLE TO THOSE BORN UNDER THE SIGNS OF JUPITER, VIRGO, ARIES AND CAPRICORN.— ALSO THOSE WITH A BULGING TRUST FUND, A YACHT AND A 500 ACRE ESTATE, WITH NO MORTGAGES! GREAT PROMISE OF IMPROVEMENT IS IN STORE FOR MANKIND GENERALLY AND— I ALSO PREDICT THAT...
... BY A SECRET CHEMICAL PROCESS, CERTAIN GRAIN STALKS OF STRAW, WHEN CROSSED WITH LEATHER SWEATBANDS (SIZED TO SUIT), WILL SOON PRODUCE A VERY HUSKY CROP OF STRAW HATS ANNUALLY!
YEAH... NEXT YEAR I'M GONNA RAISE ME SOME PANAMAS!
AND BY A NEWLY DISCOVERED DEVICE YOU WILL GET ALL OF ONE DAY'S WRONG PHONE NUMBERS IN A BUNCH — FROM 10:40 A.M. TO 10:50 A.M.— THIS WILL SAVE A HEAP OF HEADACHE TABLETS!
THANK YOU, THANK YOU! THANKS! NOW I'M GONNA PLAY A LI'L GOLF!!

QUICK-FREEZING PROCESSED FOOD WILL FILL THE RESTAURANT MENUS A FEW SHORT MONTHS FROM NOW! AND AN ORDINARY MEAL WILL BE ORDERED SOMETHING LIKE THIS —

'LO, SENATOR!— LEMME HAVE AN ICICLE OF ROAST BEEF— SOME SLEET CLAM CHOWDER— SLUSH PUMPKIN PIE A LA MODE AN' A BLIZZARD OF JAVA!!

BRR BRR

MAGNESIUM, THE LIGHTEST METAL IN THE WORLD, WILL SOON FILL ITS OWN IMPORTANT PLACE IN WORLD AFFAIRS—AND IN A BIG WAY!

GOT SICK 'N' TIRED WORRYIN' 'BOUT THIS BEING IN THE OFFICE ALONE EVERY NIGHT— NOW I BRING IT HOME!

FLOATING COUNTRY ESTATES WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE TO THE TOURIST-MINDED STAY-AT-HOMES— LABRADOR IN THE SUMMER—THE CARIBBEAN IN THE WINTER (SEASICKNESS BOTH WAYS EN ROUTE) SIZED 5 TO 20 ACRES, SPEED 20 KNOTS —

JUNIOR!— WHERE'S YOUR PAP?

HE'S DOWN CELLAR, MAW— TRAWLING FOR SHARKS!

ENGINE ROOM

PILOT HOUSE

NO PEDDLERS

VICTORY GARDEN

A NEW VENDING MACHINE THAT PROMISES TO GIVE YOU A HAIRCUT, SHAMPOO, SHAVE, SINGE, SHINE WITH COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS—ALL IN 3 MINUTES, TO THE TUNE OF LOHENGRIN, WILL SOON BE OFFERED FOR PUBLIC SALE —

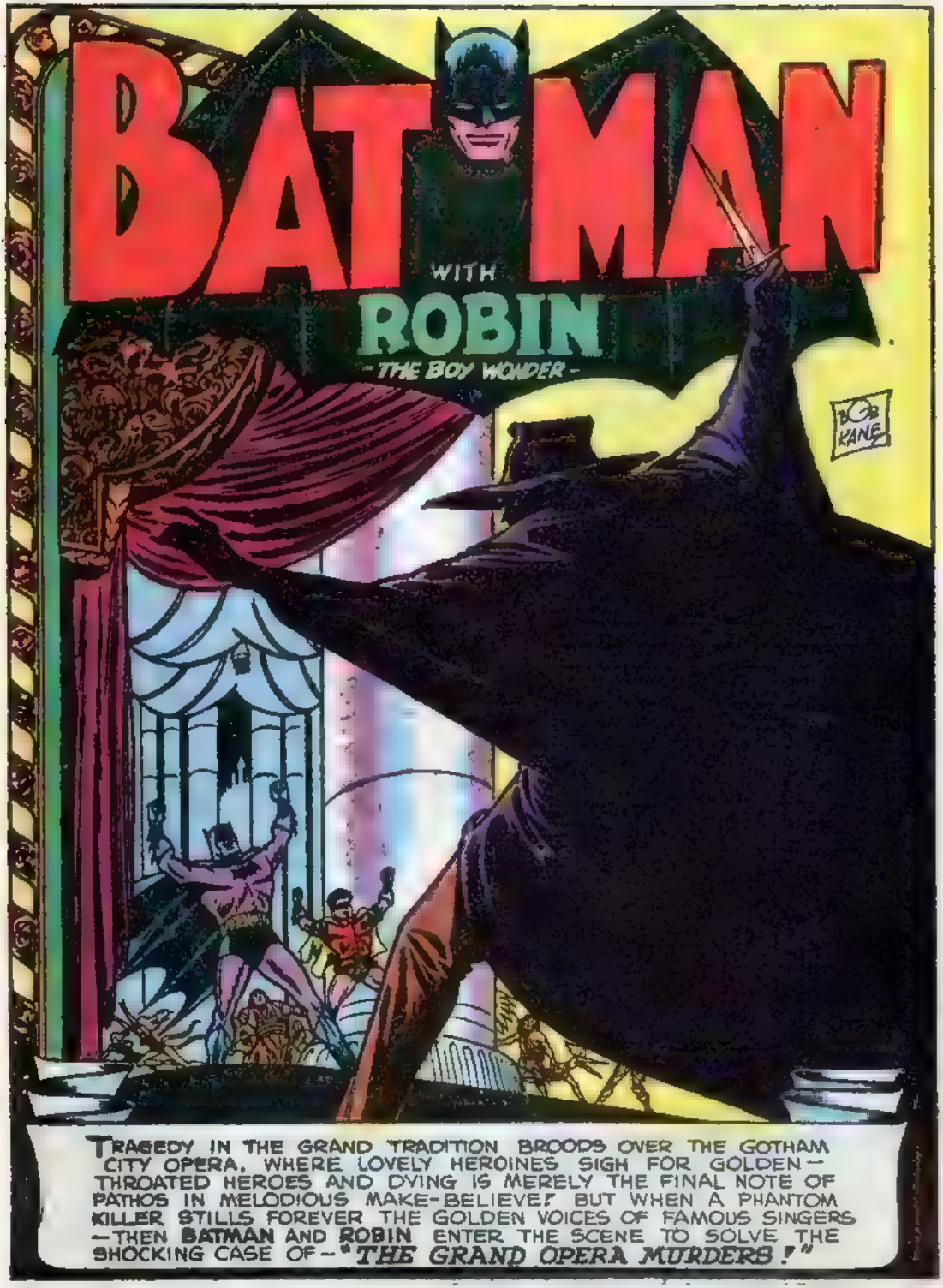
IF I NEVER COME BACK, LI'L EVA— I'LL WRITE!

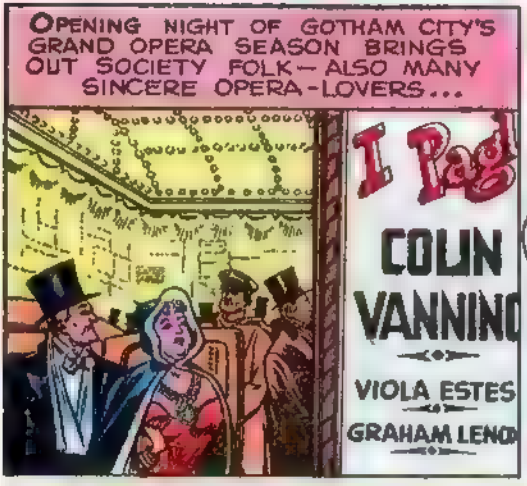
NO TIPPING PLEASE

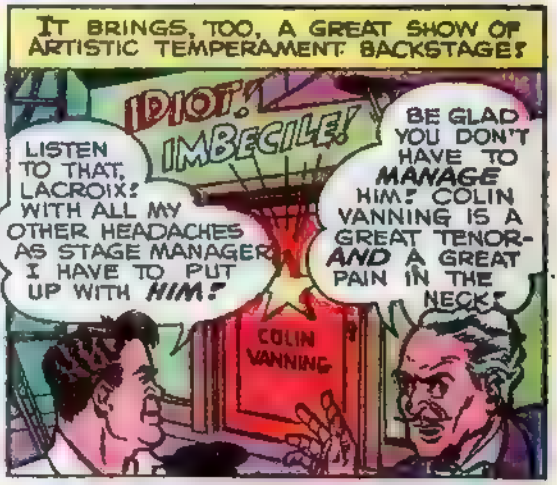
AND SCIENCE WILL FINALLY PERFECT A METHOD FOR TAKING THE SHINE OUT OF A BLUE SERGE SUIT, WHILE ALSO CHANGING THE COLOR, SIZE, AND STYLE OF THE GARMENT, ALL IN ONE 3 MINUTE OPERATION.

NOW IT'S A GREEN TWEED OVERCOAT—TOO BIG THOUGH! OBOY! AM I PROUD!!

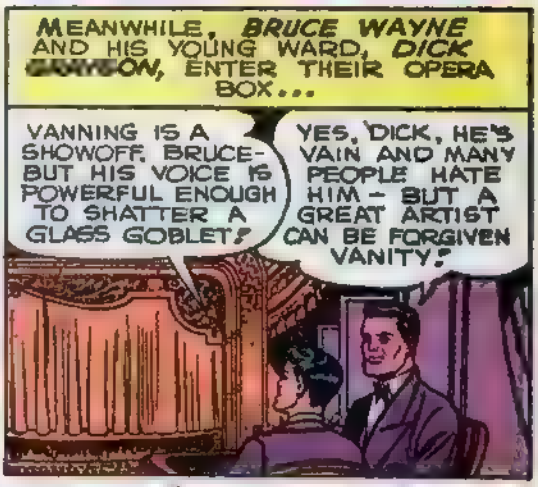
THE END

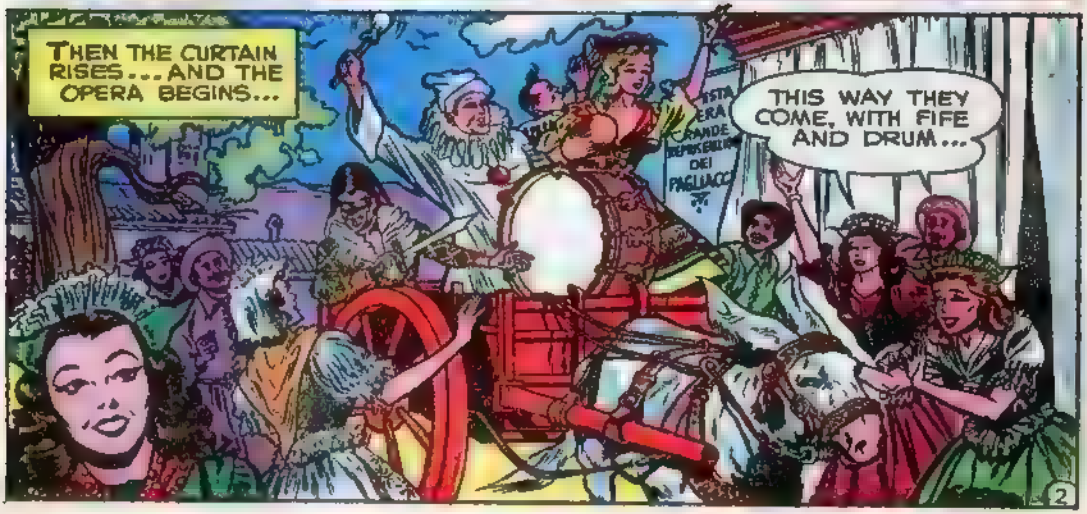

BATMAN
WITH
ROBIN
-THE BOY WONDER-
BOB KANE
TRAGEDY IN THE GRAND TRADITION BROODS OVER THE GOTHAM CITY OPERA, WHERE LOVELY HEROINES SIGH FOR GOLDEN-THROATED HEROES AND DYING IS MERELY THE FINAL NOTE OF PATHOS IN MELODIOUS MAKE-BELIEVE! BUT WHEN A PHANTOM KILLER STILLS FOREVER THE GOLDEN VOICES OF FAMOUS SINGERS —THEN BATMAN AND ROBIN ENTER THE SCENE TO SOLVE THE SHOCKING CASE OF—"THE GRAND OPERA MURDERS!"

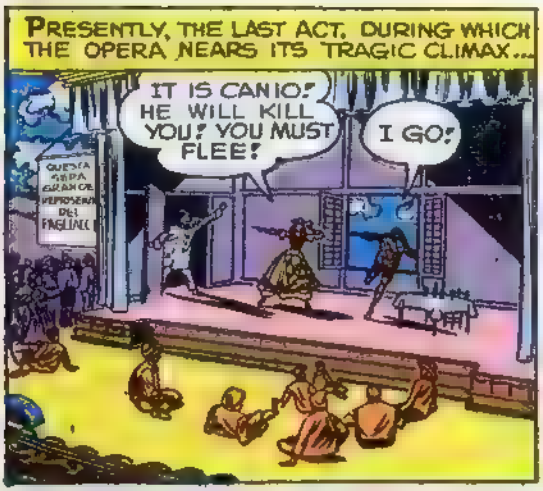

OPENING NIGHT OF GOTHAM CITY'S GRAND OPERA SEASON BRINGS OUT SOCIETY FOLK — ALSO MANY SINCERE OPERA-LOVERS...
I Pag
COLIN
VANNING
VIOLA ESTES
GRAHAM LENO

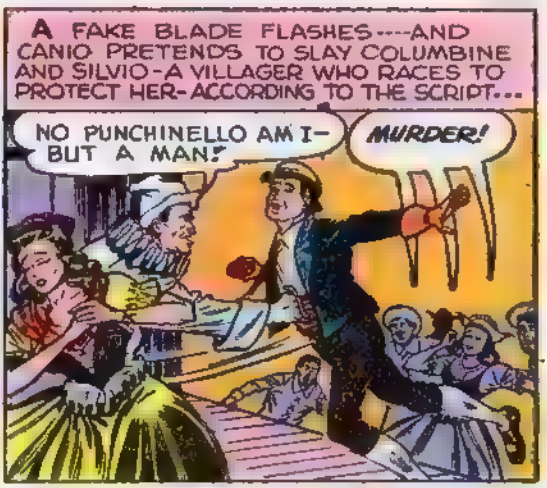

IT BRINGS, TOO, A GREAT SHOW OF ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT BACKSTAGE!
IDIOT! IMBECILE!
LISTEN TO THAT, LACROIX! WITH ALL MY OTHER HEADACHES AS STAGE MANAGER I HAVE TO PUT UP WITH HIM!
BE GLAD YOU DON'T HAVE TO MANAGE HIM! COLIN VANNING IS A GREAT TENOR- AND A GREAT PAIN IN THE NECK!
COLIN VANNING

BEHIND THE DOOR, VANNING DRESSES FOR THE ROLE OF CANIO IN I PAGLIACCI...
BE CAREFUL WITH THAT COLLAR, FOOL!
Y-YES, SIR, MR. VANNING, SIR!

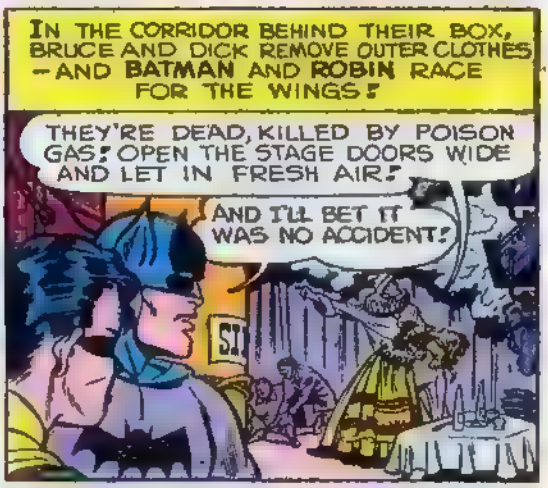

MEANWHILE, BRUCE WAYNE AND HIS YOUNG WARD, DICK [illegible]ON, ENTER THEIR OPERA BOX...
VANNING IS A SHOWOFF, BRUCE- BUT HIS VOICE IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO SHATTER A GLASS GOBLET!
YES, DICK, HE'S VAIN AND MANY PEOPLE HATE HIM - BUT A GREAT ARTIST CAN BE FORGIVEN VANITY!

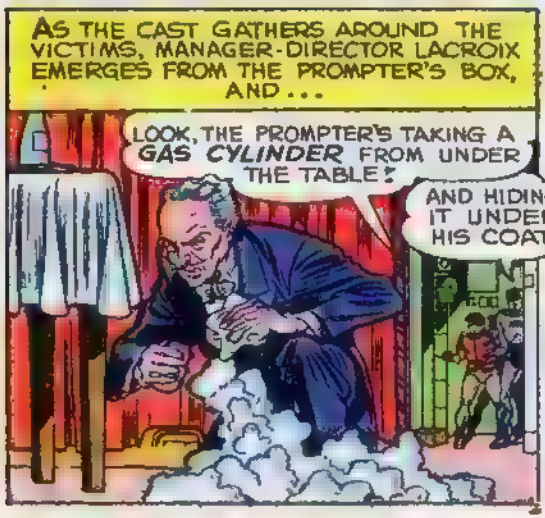

THEN THE CURTAIN RISES... AND THE OPERA BEGINS...
THIS WAY THEY COME, WITH FIFE AND DRUM...

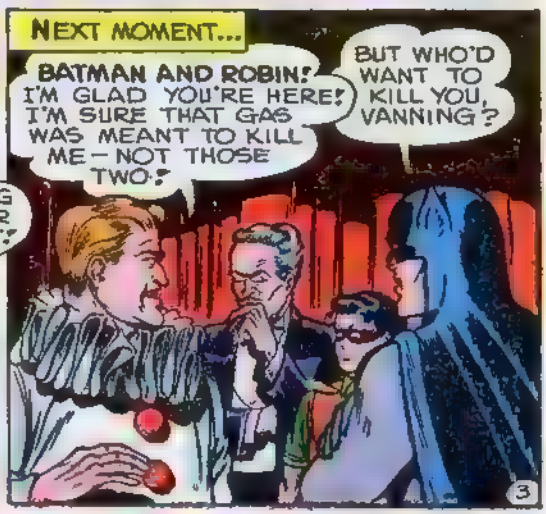

PRESENTLY, THE LAST ACT, DURING WHICH THE OPERA NEARS ITS TRAGIC CLIMAX...
IT IS CANIO! HE WILL KILL YOU! YOU MUST FLEE!
I GO!


A FAKE BLADE FLASHES---AND CANIO PRETENDS TO SLAY COLUMBINE AND SILVIO-A VILLAGER WHO RACES TO PROTECT HER-ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPT...
NO PUNCHINELLO AM I- BUT A MAN!
MURDER!

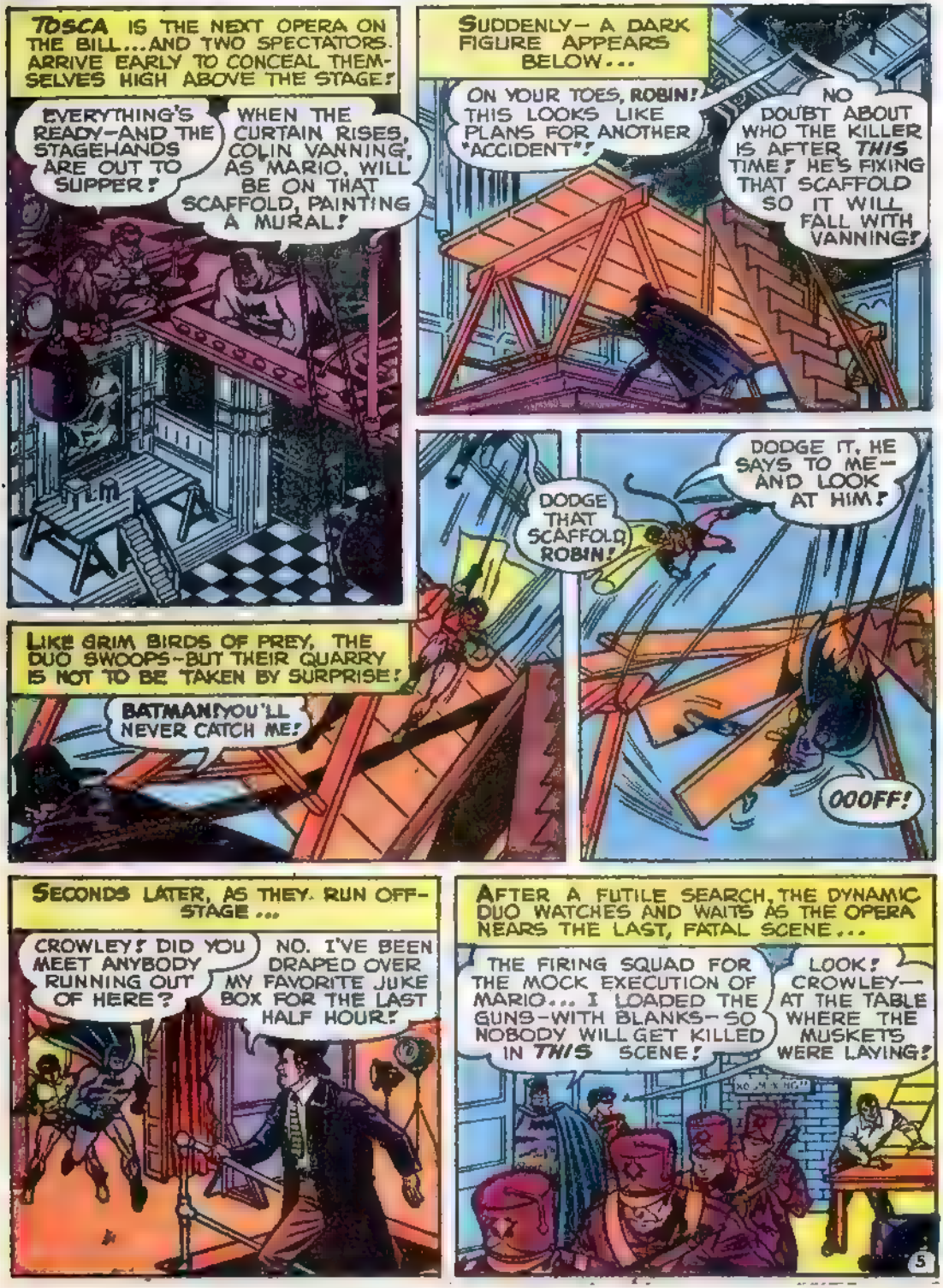
NOW FOR THE TRAGIC CLOWN'S CLOSING LINE- "THE COMEDY IS ENDED!" BUT, INSTEAD...
(COUGH! COUGH!) MY THROAT! I'M CHOKING!
SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG, DICK! LET'S GET BACKSTAGE!


IN THE CORRIDOR BEHIND THEIR BOX, BRUCE AND DICK REMOVE OUTER CLOTHES -AND BATMAN AND ROBIN RACE FOR THE WINGS!
THEY'RE DEAD, KILLED BY POISON GAS! OPEN THE STAGE DOORS WIDE AND LET IN FRESH AIR!
AND I'LL BET IT WAS NO ACCIDENT!

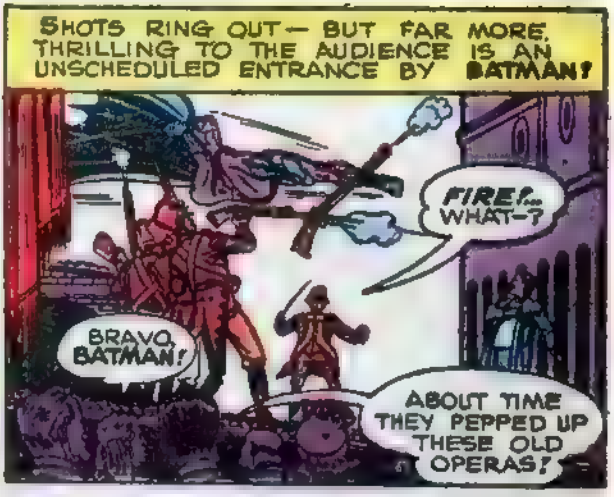

AS THE CAST GATHERS AROUND THE VICTIMS, MANAGER-DIRECTOR LACROIX EMERGES FROM THE PROMPTER'S BOX, AND...
LOOK, THE PROMPTER'S TAKING A GAS CYLINDER FROM UNDER THE TABLE!
AND HIDING IT UNDER HIS COAT!

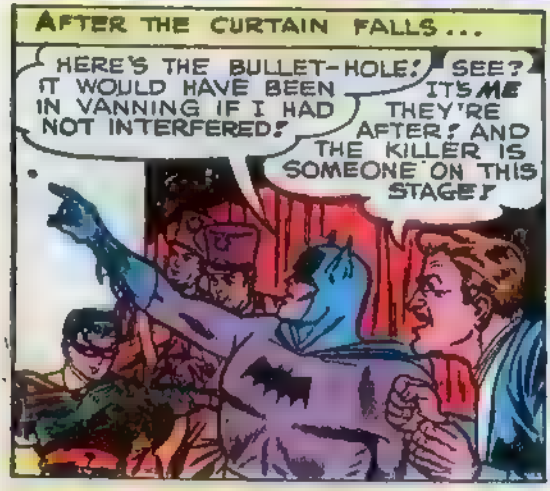

NEXT MOMENT...
BATMAN AND ROBIN! I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE! I'M SURE THAT GAS WAS MEANT TO KILL ME- NOT THOSE TWO!
BUT WHO'D WANT TO KILL YOU, VANNING?
3

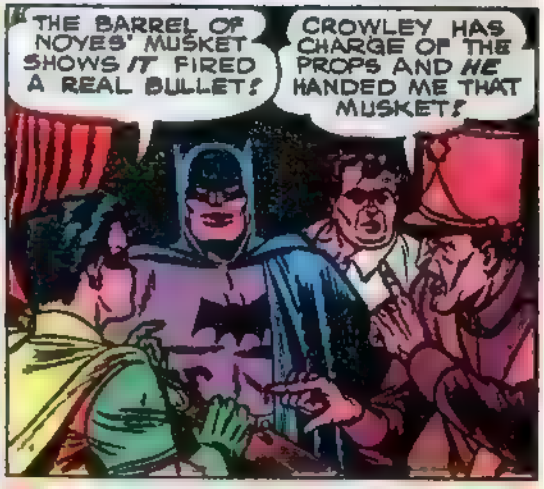
MANY PEOPLE HATE ME! LACROIX, CROWLEY AND NOYES, HERE, WHO USED TO SING THE TENOR ROLES I NOW GET!
IT'S TRUE THAT I'M NOT GETTING THE BREAKS I USED TO—BUT I BLAME LACROIX, NOT VANNING!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! WHY SHOULD I KILL OFF MY BEST SINGERS?
I WAS IN THE CAFE NEXT DOOR PLAYING THE JUKE BOX—AND I CAN PROVE IT!
THE MYSTERY DEEPENS...
LACROIX WAS IN THE PROMPTER'S BOX AND NOYES WAS SINGING IN THE CHORUS!
YES, EVERYBODY SEEMS TO HAVE AN ALIBI!
BUT AS LACROIX STARTS TO LEAVE...
I'LL CALL THE POLICE... HUH?
I'LL TAKE CHARGE OF THAT EMPTY GAS CYLINDER YOU'VE GOT UNDER YOUR COAT, LACROIX!
I WAS HOLDING IT TO AVOID BAD PUBLICITY FOR THE OPERA, BATMAN! CAN'T WE CALL THIS AN ACCIDENT TILL IT'S PROVEN OTHERWISE?
IF THE POLICE AGREE! BUT NO CONCEALING EVIDENCE!
LACKING TANGIBLE CLUES, THE POLICE AGREE TO CALL IT AN ACCIDENT TEMPORARILY.... AND NEXT DAY'S PAPERS PRINT "JINX"-HEADLINES!
WUX-TREE! TWO DIE AT OPERA!
THE GOTHAM GAZETTE
DEATH STRIKES TWICE AT OPERA AS TRAGIC ENDING COMES TRUE!
BATMAN AND POLICE MYSTIFIED BY "JINX" CASE!

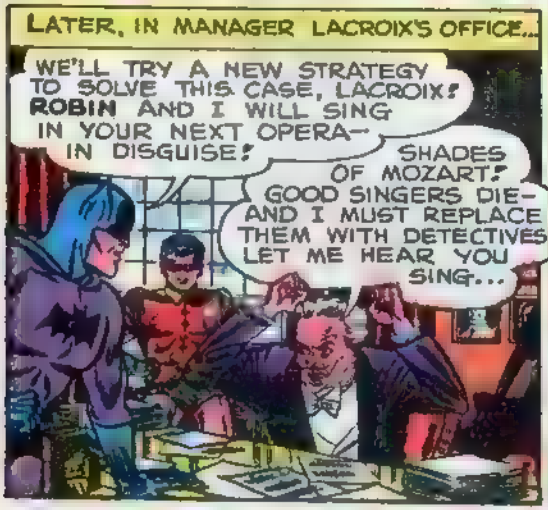

TOSCA IS THE NEXT OPERA ON THE BILL... AND TWO SPECTATORS ARRIVE EARLY TO CONCEAL THEMSELVES HIGH ABOVE THE STAGE!
EVERYTHING'S READY—AND THE STAGEHANDS ARE OUT TO SUPPER!
WHEN THE CURTAIN RISES, COLIN VANNING, AS MARIO, WILL BE ON THAT SCAFFOLD, PAINTING A MURAL!
SUDDENLY— A DARK FIGURE APPEARS BELOW...
ON YOUR TOES, ROBIN! THIS LOOKS LIKE PLANS FOR ANOTHER "ACCIDENT"!
NO DOUBT ABOUT WHO THE KILLER IS AFTER THIS TIME! HE'S FIXING THAT SCAFFOLD SO IT WILL FALL WITH VANNING!
DODGE THAT SCAFFOLD, ROBIN!
DODGE IT, HE SAYS TO ME— AND LOOK AT HIM!
OOOFF!
LIKE GRIM BIRDS OF PREY, THE DUO SWOOPS—BUT THEIR QUARRY IS NOT TO BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE!
BATMAN! YOU'LL NEVER CATCH ME!
SECONDS LATER, AS THEY RUN OFF-STAGE...
CROWLEY! DID YOU MEET ANYBODY RUNNING OUT OF HERE?
NO. I'VE BEEN DRAPED OVER MY FAVORITE JUKE BOX FOR THE LAST HALF HOUR!
AFTER A FUTILE SEARCH, THE DYNAMIC DUO WATCHES AND WAITS AS THE OPERA NEARS THE LAST, FATAL SCENE...
THE FIRING SQUAD FOR THE MOCK EXECUTION OF MARIO... I LOADED THE GUNS—WITH BLANKS—SO NOBODY WILL GET KILLED IN THIS SCENE!
LOOK! CROWLEY— AT THE TABLE WHERE THE MUSKETS WERE LAYING!
5

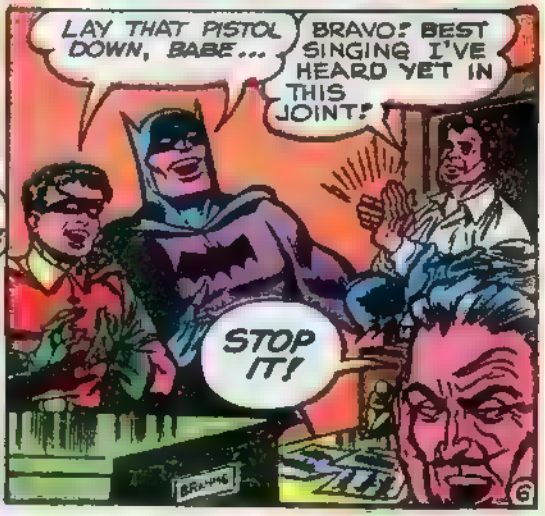
THEN CROWLEY RUSHES UP TO BATMAN...
I FOUND A BLANK CARTRIDGE ON THE TABLE! WHAT IF SOMEONE PUT A REAL ONE IN ITS PLACE IN ONE OF THE MUSKETS?
GREAT SCOTT— AND THEY'RE READY TO SHOOT!
READY— AIM—


SHOTS RING OUT— BUT FAR MORE THRILLING TO THE AUDIENCE IS AN UNSCHEDULED ENTRANCE BY BATMAN!
FIRE!... WHAT—?
BRAVO, BATMAN!
ABOUT TIME THEY PEPPED UP THESE OLD OPERAS!


AFTER THE CURTAIN FALLS...
HERE'S THE BULLET-HOLE! IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN VANNING IF I HAD NOT INTERFERED!
SEE? IT'S ME THEY'RE AFTER! AND THE KILLER IS SOMEONE ON THIS STAGE!


THE BARREL OF NOYES' MUSKET SHOWS IT FIRED A REAL BULLET!
CROWLEY HAS CHARGE OF THE PROPS AND HE HANDED ME THAT MUSKET!


LATER, IN MANAGER LACROIX'S OFFICE...
WE'LL TRY A NEW STRATEGY TO SOLVE THIS CASE, LACROIX! ROBIN AND I WILL SING IN YOUR NEXT OPERA— IN DISGUISE!
SHADES OF MOZART! GOOD SINGERS DIE— AND I MUST REPLACE THEM WITH DETECTIVES! LET ME HEAR YOU SING...


LAY THAT PISTOL DOWN, BABE...
BRAVO! BEST SINGING I'VE HEARD YET IN THIS JOINT!
STOP IT!
BRAUNE
6

A HORRIBLE SONG! BUT THEIR VOICES WILL PASS IN A CHORUS!
WE CAN'T SHATTER GLASSES, BUT I'LL BET WE CAN SHATTER EARDRUMS!
DO-MI-SOL-DO-O-O-O...
AWFUL!
HERE'S THE SCORE FOR THE GYPSY BLACKSMITHS IN "IL TROVATORE"! IF YOU POUND THE ANVILS LOUD ENOUGH, NO ONE WILL HEAR YOU SING!
"IL TROVATORE GOES ON NEXT EVENING WITH VANNING SINGING THE ROLE OF MANRICO, AND BATMAN AND ROBIN HAMMERING ON THE ANVILS IN THE FAMOUS ANVIL CHORUS SCENE...
SEE HOW THE SHADOWS LEAP...
THEN, THE LAST ACT... AND DESPERATE LEONORA LIFTS A CUP OF POISON TO HER LIPS...
SHE WAS TO PRETEND TO DRINK FROM AN EMPTY GOBLET, BATMAN — BUT THERE'S LIQUID IN THAT GLASS!
WHAT! GREAT CAESAR! BUT IF WE YELLED OR RAN OUT, WE MIGHT STARTLE HER INTO GULPING IT!
VANNING, I DARE YOU TO SHATTER THAT GLASS WITH YOUR VOICE!
BAH! WHAT DO I CARE FOR YOUR DARE! ... STILL, TO AMUSE MYSELF, I'LL DO IT!

AND A SINGLE, MAGNIFICENT, PIERCING NOTE FILLS THE THEATER AS LEONORA HESITATES, THE GOBLET VIBRATING IN HER HAND...

AAA-AAA-AAA-AAA

SO LEONORA DOES NOT DRINK— BUT PRETENDS DEATH ANYWAY AS THE DEATH OF MANRICO IS ENACTED...

THE COUNT IS CONDEMNING THE TROUBADOUR TO DEATH.., NOW *I'LL* TAKE THE HEADSMAN'S PART!

THEN WE CAN BE SURE THE AX WON'T DO ANY *REAL* DAMAGE!

SUDDENLY, A CLOCKWORK MECHANISM CLICKS HIGH ABOVE THE STAGE... THEN...

BATMAN! ANOTHER AX— FALLING ON VANNING!

AS STEEL CLASHES ON STEEL IN MID-AIR, NOYES LEAPS FROM THE WINGS, AND...

LOOK OUT, VANNING!

THE HEAVY AXES MISS VANNING— BUT HE DOES NOT RISE FROM WHERE HE HAS FALLEN!

HE'S UNCONSCIOUS! GET A DOCTOR!

DR. INGRAM— VANNING'S PHYSICIAN— IS IN THE AUDIENCE!

BUT FATE IS NOT READY FOR COLIN VANNING TO DIE ....

WH-WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU FAINTED! I WARNED YOU AGAINST THE TERRIFIC STRAIN ON YOUR HEART WHEN YOU SING THAT GLASS SHATTERING NOTE!

YOU SAVED HIS LIFE, NOYES, AT THE RISK OF YOUR OWN! I THOUGHT YOU HATED HIM!
I HATE HIS VANITY, HIS SELFISHNESS, HIS SNEERING EGOTISM! BUT—
—HIS GREAT VOICE BRINGS JOY TO MANY! I'M A HAS-BEEN, BUT I'D DIE TO PROTECT A VOICE LIKE HIS!
WAIT, NOYES! I'VE MISJUDGED YOU! I PUT YOU IN THE CHORUS BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU WERE TOO CRITICAL!
YOU'RE A TRUE ARTIST! VANNING WILL NEED A REST NOW! YOU WILL SING THE ROLE OF SAMSON IN HIS PLACE TOMORROW NIGHT!
DO YOU MEAN IT, LACROIX? IT'S MY FAVORITE PART!
NOW I CAN RELAX! WITH VANNING AT HOME IN BED, THERE'LL BE NO MORE OPERA MURDERS!
I'M NOT SO SURE, LACROIX! THE LIQUID SPILLED FROM THAT VOICE-SHATTERED GLASS TURNED RED LITMUS PAPER BLUE! THAT MEANS POISON...
... SOMEONE WANTED TO KILL MILDRED STARR, WHO SANG THE ROLE OF LEONORA!
SHADES OF VERDI! SOME MADMAN — A CRAZY PHANTOM OF THE GOTHAM OPERA IS TRYING TO RUIN MY COMPANY!
MADMAN... PHANTOM...
LECROIX'S SHOCKED WORDS ECHO IN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES AND RADIO NEWSCASTS...
MEANWHILE, GOTHAMITES OFFER FANTASTIC SUMS FOR TICKETS TO "SAMSON AND DELILAH"— THE OPERATIC VERSION OF ONE OF HISTORY'S MOST FAMOUS TALES OF TREACHERY AND VENGEANCE!

NEXT DAY, BATMAN AND ROBIN WATCH PREPARATIONS FOR THE BIG SPECTACLE...
YOU SEE, ROBIN, IN THE FINAL SCENE, FALLING SCENERY WOULD CRUSH THE ACTORS IF: NETS AND ROPES DIDN'T CATCH THE PIECES!
PRESENTLY...
WHY, HE'S CUTTING THE ROPES SO THEY'LL BREAK UNDER A STRAIN!
HEY— WHAT'S THE IDEA!
YOU AGAIN? TAKE THAT!
BATMAN! HELP!
COMING, ROBIN!
THANKS, PAL!
HE'S NOT AS GOOD AT DODGING AS YOU ARE!
OOOH-H-H!
I'LL MAKE HIM SORRY FOR THAT!
HE RIGGED THE NET SO HE COULD PULL IT DOWN WITH THAT ROPE— AND HE'S GETTING AWAY!
HO-HO HO-HO!

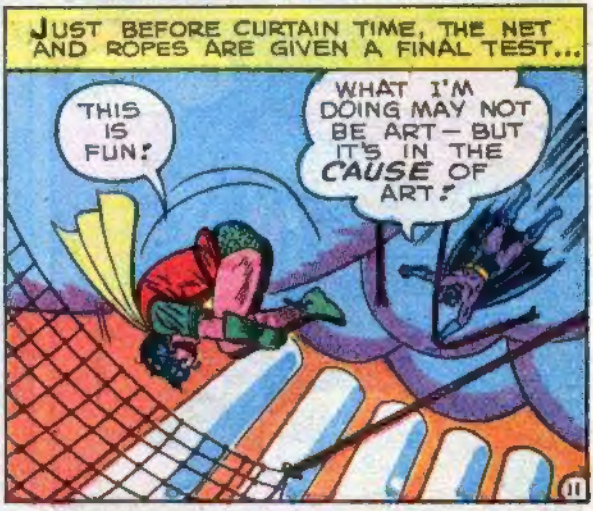
ONCE MORE, THE DYNAMIC DUO SEARCHES BACKSTAGE IN VAIN!
MUST BE A THOUSAND HIDING PLACES HERE!
HMM—THE DOOR OF VANNING'S DRESSING ROOM IS OPEN! LET'S GO IN!
COLIN VANNING

OH, BOY, WHAT A MAKE-UP KIT! PAINTS, PUTTY, FALSE WIGS AND WHISKERS, NOSTRIL PLUGS, AND...
NOSTRIL PLUGS? HMM... HEY—LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THAT KIT!

SUDDENLY...
WHAT ARE YOU DOLTS DOING IN MY DRESSING ROOM?
VANNING! THE DOCTOR TOLD YOU TO STAY IN BED!

BAH! ALL DOCTORS ARE FOOLS! AND I REFUSE TO LET ANYTHING INTERFERE WITH MY SINGING!
PLEASE, VANNING, DON'T GO ON! I'M AFRAID OF WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO YOU! BESIDES, I PROMISED NOYES YOUR ROLE!

LET NOYES SING THE SECOND TENOR LEAD! AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!
I THINK HE DOES, AT THAT, LACROIX! LET HIM SING!


JUST BEFORE CURTAIN TIME, THE NET AND ROPES ARE GIVEN A FINAL TEST...
THIS IS FUN!
WHAT I'M DOING MAY NOT BE ART—BUT IT'S IN THE CAUSE OF ART!

THEN—ON WITH THE SHOW! AND AS THE MIGHTY SAMSON IS LULLED BY THE SONG OF THE BEAUTIFUL DELILAH...
SPRING VOICES ARE SINGING...
FINALLY, AS SAMSON IS SHORN OF HIS STRENGTH-GIVING LOCKS AND BLINDED...
O FEEBLE GIANT, SING US A SONG IN PRAISE OF DELILAH!
GIVE ME BUT A MOMENT OF MY STRENGTH...
NOW THE TERRIFYING CLIMAX... SAMSON PULLS THE TEMPLE DOWN!
AAA-AAA-AAA-H
BRAVO! BRAVO COLIN VANNING! WHAT A VOICE!
AS THE CURTAIN DROPS, MUFFLING THE WILD APPLAUSE...
VANNING WON'T TAKE ANY BOWS, LACROIX! HE'S DEAD!
BUT—BUT THAT PIECE OF PILLAR IS ONLY CARDBOARD AND CANVAS! HOW COULD IT KILL HIM!
THE PILLAR DIDN'T KILL HIM! VANNING SANG HIMSELF TO DEATH!
NOYES IS RIGHT! HE COMMITTED SUICIDE IN A LAST VAIN GRASP FOR FAME—OR INFAMY!

VANNING RELEASED THAT POISON GAS THE FIRST NIGHT, WEARING NOSTRIL PLUGS TO SAVE HIMSELF! HE WANTED TO KILL OTHERS BEFORE HIMSELF!
BUT WHY?
HIS HEART AILMENT WOULD HAVE FORCED HIS RETIREMENT SOON! SO HE PLANNED TO DIE—AND TO TAKE WITH HIM THOSE WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO GET THE APPLAUSE HE LOVED.
A GREAT SINGER—BUT A MADMAN!
HE WAS AN EGOMANIAC! HE WANTED TO DIE SPECTACULARLY SO THAT HE WOULD BE REMEMBERED!
AND HE DID!
WHEN HE HAD THAT STROKE LAST NIGHT, HE REALIZED HE COULD BURST HIS HEART, AS HE SHATTERED GOBLETS, WITH THAT TERRIFIC NOTE! TONIGHT, HE SANG THAT NOTE—BUT LOUDER AND LONGER...
UNTIL HIS HEART SHATTERED!
SO ENDS OUR STORY, AS TRAGICALLY AS ANY OPERA! AND ANOTHER EVENING ...
NOYES RATES THE BREAKS HE'S GETTING! HE HASN'T VANNING'S COLOR, BUT HE'S A GREAT TENOR!
TAKE A LOOK, BRUCE! THERE'S CROWLEY AND LACROIX!
JOSEPH NOYES in "La Boheme"
BUT I NEED YOU AT REHEARSAL, CROWLEY!
SEE MY ASSISTANT! I NEED SOME JUKE-BOX JIVE TO FORTIFY ME AGAINST TONIGHT'S SCREECHING!
The END